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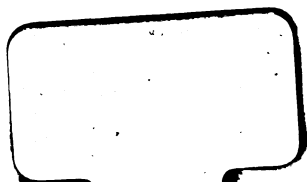
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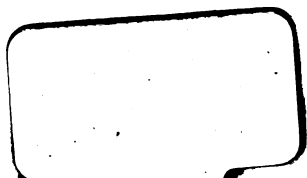
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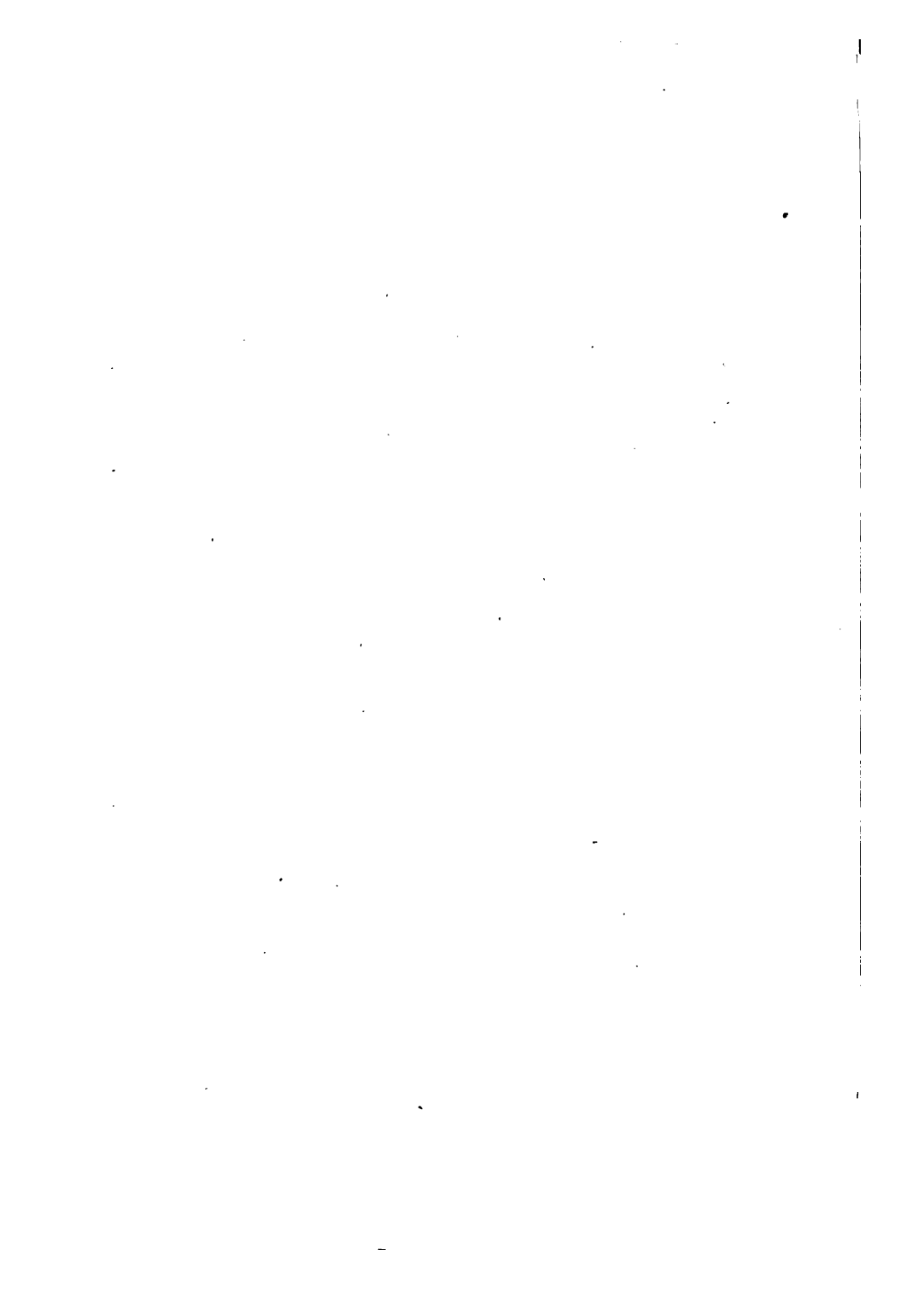


A
FRIEND AT COURT.



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FRIEND AT COURT.

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A Nobel.

BY
ALEX. CHARLES EWALD, F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF
"THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ALGERNON SYDNEY," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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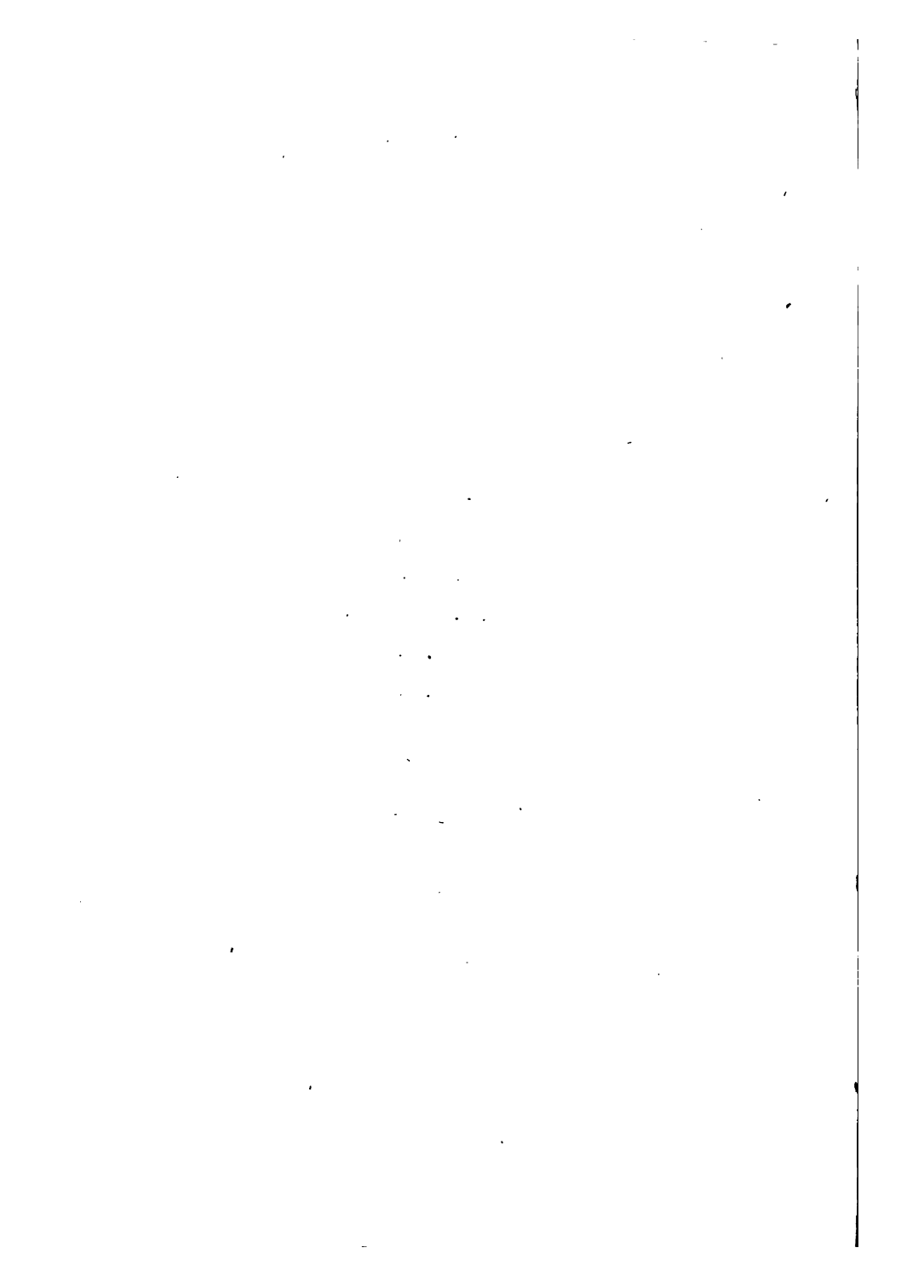
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A FRIEND AT COURT.

CHAPTER I.

Ü N T E R D E N L I N D E N .

A MONTH after the events related in the last chapter, the dying August sun was seen struggling with the lengthening shadows thrown by a certain copse of lime trees at the end of a meadow which runs along the banks of the Adle. Seated beneath one of these trees is Muriel Barillon, her dark brown Louis-Quatorze hat is by her side hanging on a neighbouring bough, and thus her bright, fair face and massy bronzed hair are revealed to the full. She is charmingly dressed in one of those delicious costumes which summer never fails to introduce amongst us, and which falls about her splendid figure like the drapery

of a statue. A piece of Berlin work lies between her slender fingers, and the needle with the dark-red work in its wake is deftly threading its way through the lattice of the canvas. At her feet, lounging in a gracefully recumbent position (did you ever see a young man of the present day sit or stand without lounging? life is such a bore one must be propped up to support it, I suppose) is Kit. An open volume of Schiller's "Marie Stuart" is before him, and within a stone's throw lies the punt he has taken latterly to paddle about the Adle. The spot where the two are is called Den Linden, and is a favourite haunt of the good people of Riesenheim.

"There!" said Kit, shutting up his Schiller with a bang, "I am not going to bore you any more with my wretched pronunciation and translation. I think we've both had enough of this for one day."

"Oh, but you don't bore me at all, Mr. Mowbray," says a soft, *trainante* voice. "I am very glad to be of assistance to you. You have certainly made immense progress."

"Then it is all owing to you. I have

learnt more German by reading Schiller with you and saying my verbs to Miss Lysaght, than I could have acquired from all the Professors in the world. It only shows the superiority of women over men in an educational point of view. I shall certainly side with the new agitation and go in for Women's Rights. How delightful it would be, for instance, if all the Professors at Riesenheim belonged to your charming sex, and instructed the young idea how to read up this disagreeable language! If women are as qualified as men, why shouldn't they be entitled to enter themselves for the race of life. It would make existence a perfect Eden."

"I am afraid you have chosen an unfortunate simile to support your case," said Miss Barillon, smiling, "for it was through a woman that your sex lost Eden, and it would be rather too hazardous a proceeding, perhaps, to admit her again."

"Oh, let bygones be bygones," said Kit. "If woman made us lose paradise, she has done all in her power to compensate by making life a paradise. You are not an

advocate then for woman's rights, Miss Barillon?" asked he, with mock gravity.

"Oh, yes I am. I am fully in favour of women's *rights*—everything that a woman should have to ameliorate her condition without detracting from her effeminacy I am staunchly in favour of. But to graft *men's* rights upon woman's position is an ambition as absurd as it is impracticable. The province of man is the intellect; the province of woman the affections, and she should be content with what her God intended her for."

"Beautiful! beautiful!" sighed Kit, melodramatically. "You have converted me. I will no more advocate the competition of women with men in the arena of life. It was only as you taught me German, and with those fair fingers pointed out to me the incomprehensible position of the verbs, that I thought, How could men have the audacity to arrogate to themselves a monopoly in the empire of intellect? I did pretty well at Oxford; but what do I know compared with you? Why, if you were a man——"

"I should never cease regretting I was not a woman," interrupted Miss Barillon, laughing.

"I am delighted you are so satisfied with your lot. I have no wish, I can assure you, to see you other than you are. But, as I said before, if you were a man you might be anything from a General to a Lord Chancellor. And if women's rights were adopted, how delightful it would be for both the sexes to go hand in hand through life! Why, there would be no such thing as monotony in any profession! What lawyer would find his briefs dull if he had to argue before a pretty judge, and perhaps plead his own cause as well as that of his clients? Would the congregation ever yawn if they were addressed by a winsome lady-rector, or object to the practice of confession? Wouldn't Parliament be a far more witty arena if women were allowed to descend from the gallery and take their places upon the cross benches? And why not; was want of speech ever the fault of woman yet?"

"What nonsense you talk, Mr. Mowbray!"

"Well, I feel in the humour for nonsense—everything is so gay and bright about me now! Do you know, before you came here I was becoming awfully bored with Riesenheim? and now, instead of looking at everything through the jaundiced spectacles of discontent, why, German life becomes tinged all *couleur de rose*!"

"Perhaps a reaction will soon set in, and your discontent again be the master?" said Muriel.

"Not till your departure!" replied the young man, quietly.

"Oh, then you can keep your jaundiced thoughts in the background a little time longer. But will my departure make so much difference to you?" And the young girl lifted her eyes from her work and looked half seriously, half in jest, at Kit.

"Difference! Why, life will then be insupportable! You don't know," said he, looking at her gravely, "how blank the future seems when I think of that awful word 'departure'!"

"But why shall we not meet again?" said Miss Barillon, smiling; "you know you

have promised to visit us at Royston! Are you given to the English fashion of making friends abroad and dropping them when at home? or do you think I cease to care for friends when once away from them?"

"You look upon me as a friend then?" said Kit, his deep blue eyes looking up and finding the reflection of their soft light in the hazel orbs of Muriel.

"In what light should I look on you unless as a friend?" said the girl, laughing. "If you are an enemy, you have the most wonderful faculty for disguising yourself."

"Ah, and I wish to be your friend, my dear Miss Barillon!" said Kit, picking up Muriel's ball of worsted, which had fallen down, and thus making it the pretext for sitting nearer her. "You do not know how happy the renewal of our acquaintance has made me. I have no dearer wish on earth than to prove myself worthy of your friendship. And as we have been such awfully good friends here, I couldn't help feeling—don't you know?—that perhaps it would all—all——" and he hesitated.

"All what?" asked Muriel, looking up.

"Why! that—that—don't you know when you get back to England—and surrounded by different scenes—and lots of people about you—you would soon lose recollection of Riesenheim, and our walks together—and those delicious rows on the Rhine."

"Oh, I am sure I shall never forget them," said Muriel quietly, and with eyes intent on her Berlin work; "I *could* never, never forget them."

"Why couldn't you?" asked Kit, in a low, deep voice. "Why couldn't you?"

"Don't you think we are wasting a great deal of time?" said Muriel, softly; "you have not had nearly enough of your German lesson yet."

"Oh, but I like talking so much better!" pleaded Kit.

"Ah, but you must remember that your first object in being here is to learn German, and you know how much your future depends on the progress you make. I must not be the innocent cause of making you neglect your studies; that would be but a

poor act of friendship. Now, take up the book and read!"

Is there anything more delicious than to receive advice from a pretty woman who shows that she takes an interest in our welfare? with what exquisite gravity she delivers her counsels, and how charming is the air of authority with which she commands obedience! Ah, if we were only bound by such silken fetters, life would be an easier pilgrimage than it is. Kit accordingly took up his Schiller and began to open its pages.

"Is it nearly time for lunch, though?" asked Muriel. "My watch is being mended."

"And do you think I ever wear mine when I come to see you?" laughed Kit. "My watch teaches me to count the hours—you teach me only to forget them! But methinks from yonder sun we have yet one hour more to wait. And now for the divine rhapsodies of this long-winded poet!" said he, opening the Schiller. "I could never make out why Germans always wear spectacles; I suppose it is from their trying

their eyes to find the end of the sentences they have to read. Let me see, what did you say was a good rule?—to look always three or four pages ahead for the verb ?”

“No, I never said anything of the kind ; and if you turn my tuition into ridicule, I shall have to devise some form of punishment.”

“Oh, by the way, talking of tuition ; for the last month, in fact ever since you came here, my tutor has taken the strongest dislike to me, and declines to come near me.”

“How very odd ! What’s his name ?”

“A man called Otway—an English fellow employed by the Doctor to read up German with his special pupils. I am afraid he is not in his right senses.”

“How very dreadful ! Do you mean he is mad ?”

“Well, not perhaps so bad as that, but he is certainly queer, and subject to strange fancies. The report is that he drinks, but my private opinion is that he has gone crazy from having been obliged to acquire this charming language.”

“Oh, you should not joke on such a sub-

ject," said Muriel, gravely ; "but something ought to be done for the poor man. What do you do, then, without his assistance?"

"I am to attend the Doctor's lectures, I believe."

"Oh, how nice for you!" said Muriel, smiling archly ; "and now you will have the pleasure of meeting my friend, Mr. Lambert, a little oftener than usual. He attends those lectures, does he not?"

"Ah, that will be an additional charm, of course," laughed Kit. "What a puppy that fellow is ! Because he lives near you, and your father knows his people, he tries to make out that you and he were such great friends—quite inseparable, in fact !"

"Poor Mr. Lambert !" smiled Miss Barillon, "I fear his vanity will always make him the victim of his own delusions ! The number of young damsels who are, according to his own account, pining away in secret in our part of the country because he refuses to listen to their sighs, is something really dreadful. I wonder he does not include poor me amongst the number !"

"Perhaps he does, for aught I know," said Kit. "He is, however, very savage with me for being so constantly here."

"I am sure it is his own fault that he is not here as often. We have asked him frequently, for we wish to show him some attention. If he pays no heed to our invitations it is not our fault. Papa at least cannot accuse us of having slighted him."

"But will Mr. Barillon care very much one way or the other? Is Mr. Lambert's a friendship so well worth cultivating?"

"I think papa would be sorry if he thought we intended to slight Andrew Lambert. But for my part I have no other wish than to be friendly to him; if he chooses to be huffy—well, that is his own affair!"

"Happy, happy Lambert! to have created the wish of friendship in the heart of Miss Barillon. The luck some fellows have! But on second thoughts the matter seems different. You say you are friendly to Lambert; but you are also friendly to me, therefore, in your estimation, Lambert and I are much about the same, I suppose!"

"Is there not such a thing as Oxford logic? Did I ever say so?"

"Well, I only hope you don't regard *me*—one of the Bighshire Mowbrays—in the same light as that supercilious hair-dresser, Lambert, who never perhaps had a grandfather," said Kit, conceitedly. The young man was a devout believer in the antiquity of his family, and his belief intensified as he got older.

"I am afraid as regards that I am something of a Radical," smiled Muriel, "for I have never put the same value on what the world calls 'birth' as my neighbours. What I like to see in a man——"

"Ah, what do you like to see in a man?" said Kit, interested.

"Well," said Muriel, slightly flushing, "when I see a man—the current of whose life finds its source in the springs of Christianity, who is manly in the best sense of the word, that is to say, courageous without brutality, and firm without cruelty, and who has a mind enriched by study and softened by refinement—why, when I see such a man I never trouble myself about his origin, for no matter

what be the accident of his birth, he is in the truest sense of the word—in fact in the only sense—a gentleman. A Prince of the Blood can be no more.”

“And I agree with you, Miss Barillon, as I always do,” said Kit, “but I think I may say without malice that Lambert hardly comes up to your ideal of perfection in man,” and he laughed.

“Now I will not let you,” said Muriel, with assumed gravity, “abuse Mr. Lambert, he is a friend of papa’s and I shall take him under my protection.”

“Oh, I wish some one would abuse me then!” sighed Kit. “But,” added he, starting to his feet, “here is Miss Lysaght, coming no doubt to take a little walk before lunch.”

Muriel hastily arose, gathered up her work, and, accompanied by Kit, went to meet her aunt.

From the above conversation we can gather a few particulars without entering into much recapitulation. Miss Lysaght had been ordered to try the waters of Riesen-heim for a couple of months, and rented a

villa on the banks of the Adle, in the quarter patronized by invalids and *malades imaginaires*. To that villa Kit soon found his way, and as he had the tact to ingratiate himself with Miss Lysaght, he soon was regarded as a constant and expected visitor. The aunt, Muriel, and Kit soon became a very friendly trio. They inspected the ruins of ancient castles together, they strolled up and down the spa listening to the music together, they sailed on the Rhine together, they punted in the sentimental twilight along the turbid waters of the Adle together, they attended the Grand Ducal receptions together, they sat on the crests of hills or beneath the shadows of friendly trees together, and read Schiller and Shakspeare, or else Muriel sang ballads and Kit spouted Tennyson whilst the accommodating Miss Lysaght fell asleep—indeed, they were almost inseparables.

Now there is but one ending to all this kind of thing, an ending which the world, ever since the days Eve adopted her leafen kirtle, has never failed to repeat. Given two young people of opposite sex, who have no objection to each other's society, who have no

reason to mourn over any spite of Nature in way of face and figure, and who have every opportunity for developing a mutual acquaintance, and the result will be—Love. Lured on by mischievous Cupid the innocent couple will pass through the frigid conventionalities of acquaintanceship into the warm domain of friendship, and here, with imagination, interest, and sympathy all at work, the day will not be long distant before they enter upon the torrid regions of affection.

And so it was with Muriel and Kit. They were charmed with their accidental rencontre, and were mutually pleased with the past recollections attaching to each, and were delighted that Fate had permitted so speedy a renewal of their acquaintance. Kit soon began to regard it as a matter of course that he should spend his leisure time at Miss Lysaght's villa. Hence it came to pass that if Muriel was attending to the plants and ferns in the garden, '7 or sketching under the trees, or reading by the river side, or in wet weather illuminating indoors, Kit generally managed to gravitate

towards her. Miss Lysaght, sentimental as are almost all old maids, was far from being a cold hostess to young Mowbray. She always made him the *bien venu* of her house, and his society was viewed as so customary a matter that his absence even for a day would have been (I say *would* have been, for the young man took care that such absence should never occur) commented upon. But as the excellent lady was not very strong, or fancied she was not, which is much the same thing in a woman, she could not always be dancing attendance on her niece. And so when Muriel, with that charming independence of action which Frenchmen think so strange, but which I trust will long be the characteristic of English girlhood, wanted to gather wild ferns in the woods, or visit a ruin or take a long walk, Kit was occasionally her cavalier.

Gradually and almost imperceptibly, as acquaintanceship deepened into friendship, their conversation contented itself with the kindly circle of themselves and sought no better topic. Mutual wishes, tastes, habits, and interests took the place of talk which

had hitherto been directed to external subjects. And when a strong personal element is introduced into the conversation of two young people, you may be sure that the arrows of the little god are beginning to irritate. Into Kit's stout heart those arrows had now twanged to the feathered hilt, and the young man was never happy except in Muriel's society; but as in her society he was always torturing himself with hopes and fears about his affection being reciprocated, I doubt very much whether he was so happy even then as he often anticipated. Not that Muriel had given him much cause for doubt. She smiled upon him in the most friendly manner, treated him with that confidence which is the harbinger of affection, and made no scruple to show her preference for him over others. But still with womanly reticence and reserve she managed to enshroud the real working of her heart in an atmosphere of mystery sufficient to puzzle Kit and often to render him a prey to suspense. He would have given not a little to have dared to remove that suspense, but he felt he had

not as yet received sufficient encouragement to enter upon that step. Besides, he was a votary of the gentle craft, and knew how often over-eagerness prevents the landing of a bite. He must therefore be patient.





CHAPTER II.

OTWAY, THE TUTOR.

ONE morning Muriel wended her way to Den Linden to make a sketch of the Finstern Gebirge, a chain of mountains outside the town which form as we all know a splendid background to the scenery of the Adle. Now on one of the spurs of this range is a magnificent ruin of a castle, beloved by all artists, the view of which is best seen from a certain mound situated in the midst of Den Linden. To this mound Miss Barillon hied, as it was her intention to introduce the ruin in her sketch. She was quite alone, as the copse in the mornings was generally unfrequented, and stood but a few minutes' walk from the garden of the villa. Miss Lysaght was to meet her a little before lunch time,

and the two were then to take their customary promenade along the banks of the river, where they never failed to encounter Kit.

Arrived at the mound, Muriel arranged her drawing paraphernalia and was soon engaged in transferring the scene before her to her sketch-book. And the panorama was worthy of the compliment. At her feet flowed the Adle, its dark waters winding their way past craggy banks or through the embranched avenues formed by the tall trees that grew on either side. Before her, shutting out the horizon, rose hill and dale covered with ripened corn, scent-breathing hay, and the tall poles of the vineyards, till all merged into the gradual swell of the Finstern Gebirge. And the mountains, conscious that they were monarchs of all they surveyed in the Duchy, reared their forest-clad crests proudly to heaven, save where they seemed torn and broken as if Nature had given their pride an occasional fall or two in order to add to the picturesqueness of her surface. Bright shone the sun overhead, and the birds pluming themselves in the

golden sheen, gave tongue to the sweetest music.

At the end of half an hour Muriel heard steps and became conscious of the presence of some one near her. She looked up. In front of her stood a man shabby of attire, haggard of face, and shaky of limb. Yet there was something about him which, in spite of the havoc dissipation had evidently made in his face and frame, seemed like evidence of better days. His face was ashy pale and he trembled all over as his eyes met those of the fair artist, and with that loss of control which marks the habitual drunkard, he seemed powerless to withdraw his glassy eyes at once from the object they rested on. He appeared to make an effort over himself, but in vain, and his wide staring orbs still remained cold and fixed upon Miss Barillon. The young girl rose from her camp-stool with a shuddering fright.

"I frighten you, Miss Barillon! you have nothing to fear from me—it is I that have to fear you," said the man huskily, but with a tremor in his voice which might

have been emotion—or might have been drink.

“Pray who are you? what do you want?” said Muriel, hurriedly gathering up her pencils and sketch-book.

“Who am I? Has time changed me so much that even *you* do not recognise me?” replied he, slowly and painfully withdrawing his eyes and casting them on the ground.

“And why even I?” asked Muriel, for the first time looking straight at her questioner. The gaze seemed to bring back some confused recollections, for her face wore a troubled expression, as if memory was struggling with forgetfulness for the mastery. “I seem to remember you, but where we have met before I cannot tell.”

“Only five years—only five years ago!” murmured the man, tears welling up into his watery eyes. “How I must be changed!” A pause ensued, during which the stranger seemed trying to control himself and to collect his faculties. A horrible thought sped vividly across Muriel’s mind that the

man was bereft of his senses, and she prepared for flight. But her preparation was cut short by the fellow raising his eyes from the ground and saying quickly with a sharp nervous action—

“Do you remember Alick Hawtrey—Richard Barillon’s private secretary?”

Muriel gave a start of astonishment, and then cried out, “Oh, now I know you! but how altered! I required the mention of your name to know who you were.” She looked at him for a few seconds, and then in a tone of deep pity, “You are indeed changed, Mr. Hawtrey.”

“My name is not Hawtrey—at least, not now—like myself it is changed,” he said, a smile flickering over his face, like a stray moonbeam upon a ruin. “I am called James Otway.”

“Oh, I have heard of you. You are the tutor of Mr. Mowbray, a friend of mine.”

The face of the man became set as in death; the complexion whitened to a still sicklier pallor than its original hue, and the pale lips bit each other in a trembling

union. All seemed weak and feeble about him save the wild light which shone in his now unnaturally bright eyes. Gradually the checked blood flowed back to its course, and with the return of its warmth Otway recovered himself, and then the fury which glanced in his eyes shed its light over his worn, hatchet-like face.

“A friend of yours!” he hissed, trembling with rage now no longer concealed. “Do you think it necessary to tell *me* that—I, who have watched you both from the day you met, and tracked your every step, and almost heard your every word! Friend! He is more than a friend; he wishes to be what I once wished to be——”

“Mr. Hawtrey!” said Muriel, drawing herself up with haughty dignity, “we have met by accident. There can be nothing you wish to say to me. May I ask you to leave me! It pains me deeply to see one whom I knew in better circumstances now so—so different. If it is in the power of us to assist your interests in this place, I will mention your name to my aunt, Miss Lysaght; but there can be no renewal of

the past between us, if you please. Pray leave me !”

“ Yes, I am different. Who knows better than I the difference between what I was and what I am. And who has been the cause ? You, Muriel !”

“ Miss Barillon ! How dare you presume to call me by that name. !” said the girl, her eyes flashing with indignation.

“ I beg your pardon,” said the man, cowed, and with the submission of a whipped spaniel. “ It is a name that has haunted me ever since the day I first saw you at Royston, and it rose unwittingly to my lips. Pray forgive me ! If you knew what a life mine has been you would not hate me.”

“ Hate you ! I never hated you, neither when you presumed upon my father’s friendship to you at home nor now,” said Muriel, sternly.

“ No, I don’t believe you ever did. No, I wish you had ; anything would have been better than that cold indifference with which you treated me,” said Hawtrey, clenching his hands nervously.

"Mr. Hawtrey," said Miss Barillon, with dignity, "I have asked you to leave me; will you have the goodness to do so?"

"*You* have not changed, Miss Barillon," answered the man, sullenly, "whatever time and misfortune have done for me. You are still the same as when you told your father I persecuted you with my attentions, and had me dismissed from what had been my home for the last seven years."

Muriel, finding that the intruder still refused to quit her presence, determined to leave him herself. She hastily caught up her sketching things and began to move towards the villa; but Hawtrey stood in front of her and stretched out his hands imploringly.

"Ah, do not leave me thus! Say something kind—something that I may treasure up in my memory. You do not know how miserable you have made me. Oh, why did you ever cross my path to my ruin!"

"To your ruin, Mr. Hawtrey?" said Muriel, coldly. "I fail to understand you. The past has nothing to reproach me with.

I regret deeply—as every woman in my position would regret—that we ever met, and had I but known that you would have viewed our acquaintance in the light you did, we never should have met.”

“I was not master of myself,” said the man, with something like pathos in his voice ; “it was impossible for me to see you, to be near you without loving you. Iced water does not run in the race whose wayward blood flows in my veins. I had hoped that I might deserve you, that my abilities might have borne me on to fortune, and that I might have rendered myself worthy of you. Oh, pray do not go ! If it was presumption——”

“It *was* presumption !” said the girl, haughtily, “not because you were of different station to mine, but because I never gave you the slightest encouragement or the slightest hope. It was a presumption ; a grave impertinence !”

“Well, I have been bitterly punished for it. My greatest enemy would forgive me if he saw me now—poor, miserable, degraded. Step by step I fell lower and lower

when driven away from you—everything I touched failed—a curse seemed to rest on me.”

“And yet I thought you were provided for. Though I was the cause of your dismissal from home I bore you no malice, and it was through me that my father got you a post in the City. Why did you leave your office?”

“I had to leave it,” said the man, sullenly.

“Alick Hawtrey,” said Miss Barillon, sternly, “you say that it was I that worked evil in your life. Ask your conscience, and see whether you do not owe what you have reaped to what you have sown. How often had you been advised to abandon your wretched habits, but all advice fell on stony ground, and I fear that even now the soil is not a whit the softer.”

“Oh, but if you will advise me—if you will take some interest in me, everything shall be as you wish,” said Hawtrey, with maudlin tenderness. “Oh, give me some hope, say that you do not loathe me, and I will lead a new life, and be a new man. Nay, but you *shall* listen to me,”

said the fellow, preventing Muriel's departure, and changing suddenly, as only a complete drunkard can change, from tenderness to fury, "I tell you I love you; that I have never ceased to love you, that you make me suffer more than man has ever suffered before. I had hoped that my passion was dead, but now, since I have seen you again, the hell of the past rises before me more vividly than ever. To me you are——"

"Have the goodness to let me pass; you must be mad to talk to me as you are now doing!"

"Yes, I am mad," cried the man, in tones which did not belie his assertion, and more to himself than to Muriel; "mad with hopeless passion, mad with jealous fury, mad with the drink which is now my only consolation. And all owing to you—you who came between me and my prosperity, and blighted my whole life! And yet you owe everything to me—everything, I tell you! Now look here," and he roughly seized Muriel's wrist.

Just then a well-known voice was heard,

saying, "Miss Barillon, can I be of any service to you?" and the next moment Hawtrey was measuring his length on the grass, contemptuously thrown there by Kit, who had taken his stroll rather earlier than usual along the Adle.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Mowbray—*so* much. I was getting terribly frightened, and he would not let me go nor leave me."

"Has he dared to insult you?" said Kit, angrily; "the fellow has been drunk the whole of the month, and half out of his mind, they tell me. Here, get up, and speak for yourself!" added he, addressing the recumbent Hawtrey, who seemed beside himself with rage.

"You shall smart for this!" cried Hawtrey, slowly rising. "I tell you you will repent this! Ha! ha! and so you are Miss Barillon's protector—you're to be the favoured one at Royston. Ha! ha! Royston! but there's many a slip between cup and lip, Miss Barillon. Royston! a fine place—a fine place! Ha! ha! Royston! But I can," and the man's voice dropped mysteriously, and he put himself

into an attitude, whilst his eyes rolled maniacally, first on Kit and then on Muriel, "a tale unfold. I say I can a tale unfold. Royston! Royston!" and he gave a spring towards Kit, so that his outstretched arm almost touched the young man's face, "is not for you—not for you; I will prevent it!"

"The man is mad," said Kit, "let me escort you home, and you can tell me how you knew him, and of his knowledge of Royston."

"Of his knowledge of Royston? of his knowledge of Royston?" repeated the man, vacantly, and standing in an attitude of perfect rigidity. "He knows everything about Royston; everything—everything—everything."

"Let us go," said Kit, in a low voice; "it is no use talking to him, he is unconscious of what he says or does," and the two walked quietly away from the spot.

"Ay, look sweet upon each other," suddenly cried Hawtrey in a loud voice, still maintaining his fixed attitude; "your sweetness will not last long—not last long!" and

he repeated the words till the two were out of earshot.

"How do you know anything about this fellow?" asked Kit.

"Oh, he was papa's steward at Royston for some time. You know Royston formerly belonged to papa's cousin—Mr. Richard Barillon, a very odd, eccentric sort of man—some people said he was actually mad. He shunned all society, and shut himself up with his books and papers. Mr. Hawtrey was his secretary, and used to draw up reports about the coins and other valuable things then at Royston—for Uncle Richard was a great antiquary.

"Why do you call him Uncle Richard, when he was your father's cousin?" asked Kit.

"Oh, that was only one of his odd ideas!" laughed Muriel. "He took rather a fancy to me, and used to ask us—but oftener me alone—to stay with him at Royston; and then it was that he said I was to call him Uncle Richard. He was not a man to be thwarted in anything

he wished, and so I did as he desired, till the habit has become quite natural to me."

"And about Hawtrey?"

"Well," said Muriel, slightly flushing; "when I used to stay at Royston, I, of course, saw a good deal of Mr. Hawtrey. Uncle Richard always treated him like a gentleman, and he was looked upon as one of the family—dined with us, drove with us, and all that kind of thing; indeed, in an odd sort of way, Uncle Richard seemed very fond of him. Well, Mr. Hawtrey was very kind to me, and took great pains to teach me how to decipher coins and old manuscripts; and being very clever, gave me a great deal of information, for which I was much obliged. We used to see a good deal of each other, and when papa succeeded to Royston—by rights, you know, the property ought to have gone to Uncle Richard's brother, Sir George Barillon, but there was some sad feud between the two, and Sir George was disinherited—well, when papa succeeded to Royston, Mr. Hawtrey told me that he

was alone and friendless in the world, and begged me to use my influence with papa not to have him sent away. The consequence was, that papa having no need of a secretary, made Mr. Hawtrey his steward."

A pause.

"Well?" asked Kit, in a long, drawn-out inquiring "well."

"Well!" replied Muriel, looking down and playing with her sunshade, "Mr. Hawtrey presumed upon my kindness to him and began——"

Another pause.

"I think I can understand," said Kit, quietly.

"Yes," continued Muriel, quickly; "and, indeed, so persecuted me, and misconstrued our intimacy, that at last I was really obliged to tell papa of it, and Mr. Hawtrey was sent away. That, however, was not the only reason of his dismissal, because papa told me that he had heard latterly so many things to his disadvantage, that he had intended to part with him at any rate."

“What brings him to Riesenheim I wonder?” asked Kit. “One would think that a man who has had an education like his—he told me that he had been at Oxford—could do better for himself than being an underpaid tutor.”

“Ah, but look what a wreck he is—he was so altered that at first I did not recognise him. I fear it is true that he is fatally addicted to drinking. I heard something of that when he was with us at Royston. Papa said that it was one of the chief reasons why he intended to get rid of him. Awful, is it not? A man who so degrades himself can never be expected to become anything.”

“The only excuse one can offer is that he is out of his senses,” said Kit.

“Oh, he must be,” said Muriel, “for he kept saying that we owed everything to him. Owed everything to him! What can he mean?”

“Ah, who can explain what a diseased mind ever means?” answered Kit. “Some insane crotchet he has got into his addled head, I suppose!”

They looked behind them, across the

meadow to the mound in Den Linden, and there saw Hawtrey still standing in the same attitude as they had left him—his tall lean figure in bold relief against the amber sky, and his arm outstretched in its air of menace.

“And so,” muttered Hawtrey to himself, her bright vision once more crosses my path! The sight of her renews all the memories of the past and love works within me as of old! I had hoped to have forgotten her, but I have not. My heart tells me I have not. How cold she was—cold as she always was! Would she be warmer if she knew how often I have journeyed down from London, and hid about the outskirts of Royston, unknown even to that sharp father of hers, in the vain hope of seeing her pass by? Would she relent if she knew how I carry her memory about with me, and how I execrate myself for being the degraded object that I am? No, I think not. She never cared for me, never gave me a sign or word that she would not have given to the most distant friend.

It was drink, accursed drink! that blinded me and let me indulge a hope that reason said could never be gratified. How could she love me—a bastard? and—ah, worse! But she loves that puppy who is always with her! I can see that, for I have followed them often enough together. How I hate him! When drink is in me I believe I could murder him! And yet why shouldn't she love him?—he is young, handsome, and no bar-sinister lies, I'll be bound, across his birth, whereas I—I, oh curse the day that I was born!"—and he sank down on the grass in a miserable stupor.





CHAPTER III.

THE BURSCHENSCHAFT.

OWING to the dislike shown by Otway towards Kit, the latter had been compelled during the last few weeks to coach German either with Dr. Stüttmacher or with one of the assistant professors. Latterly the Doctor had begun to read up specially with his pupil, and did all in his power to render him capable of understanding the lectures then being delivered by himself upon the state of the Church in the eleventh century. As these lectures were in manuscript the Doctor gave them one by one to Kit for translation, in order that when he should hear them delivered he would be the better able to understand them, and to learn the accurate pronunciation of the words. This last was far from uninteresting, and Mowbray soon

made very satisfactory progress in his studies. He was engaged one morning "grinding" away like a Trojan at these lectures when Fritz, who was servant of all work at the Professor's, brought him in a bundle of letters. The arrival of the post was always an agreeable break in Kit's matutinal studies. He used to reserve his after-breakfast smoke till the dumpy, blue tunicked, white gaitered, brass helmeted (everything was military at Riesenheim except the army, which the wags said was composed of only one man), and green spectacled little postman blew his horn before the door and handed the letters from England.

Kit had certainly no cause to complain of his correspondents; what with letters from his parents, his sisters, his University chums and the like, he was pretty well posted up in news. This morning proved no exception to the rule, for a goodly budget of epistles had been handed in to him. He took them up one by one and perused their contents. There were letters from the Canon and other members of his family, giving all the details of

domestic intelligence likely to interest the absent one ; who was to be married to whom, who was about to die, and who was about to recover, who were succeeding and who were failing, and the like. Then there was a long note on official paper from Scrope, giving him news about the Board of Conventions and of his doings at Stangate, and hoping that Mowbray would soon be ready for his examination. "I find my prophecies were wrong in anticipating a reaction against the Government. The Ministry is as safe as ever. What I mistook for the main current was only an eddy. But still work hard and come amongst us as soon as you can. I was talking yesterday to Upton—the Chief's private secretary, you know—and he said that you ought to take your post by the end of the year," &c. &c.

"Oh, I shall be fit before then, I hope," said Kit, putting down the letter.

Then there was an epistle from Arthur Barillon, saying how odd it was that his sister should have turned up at Riesenheim, and giving an account of a brief inspection that he had made of the prisons in Belgium,

together with his opinion thereon, and winding up with a hint that he thought it not unlikely that he should marry, and winter in Egypt. Then there were other letters of no importance to us; but the last one Kit took up was evidently from a stranger, with the handwriting he was not at all familiar. He seated himself in his easy chair, got hold of his long Dresden pipe, puffed slowly away for a minute or two whilst his half-closed eyes took in the view—the swift blue waters of the Rhine, the castellated crags, the distant hills, the busy little town beneath him, and the whole panorama of the Adle—and then, after a brief examination of its envelope, opened the last letter. It ran thus—

“Harewood, August 17th, 18—.

“DEAR SIR,—I do not know whether you may remember my having had the pleasure of meeting you some little time ago at Yllton-Tyrell; but on the strength of that meeting I write to ask whether you will do me a favour? I say *will*, for the favour is in your power. I am writing a paper for

the next Social Science Congress on the 'Physiological Characteristics of the Saxon,' and am busy collecting all the material I can on the subject. Perhaps you may know that I am far from being an admirer of the Saxon race; and as you have been now for some weeks resident in Germany, you may have some idea of the cause of that dislike. I hope that no Englishman who has had to undergo the penance of witnessing German life—its dirty habits, its social buffooneries, its idiotic simplicity on the one hand and blustering arrogance on the other—can be otherwise than disgusted at the thought that between him and a German there should be any blood affinity. In my former work I believe I have satisfactorily proved that Englishmen owe nothing whatever to the Teutonic race, except perhaps their habit of self-congratulation on their own superiority, a habit acquired by most minds after an examination of the manners and customs of an inferior people. But still the public mind, owing to the erroneous teaching of certain so-called critics and professors, requires to be constantly informed that we Englishmen

have nothing in common with the Teutonic race—that civilized Greece, and not brutal Germany, is our cradle land. Would you help me in placing this information before it? Would you favour me with the following facts, which you can easily obtain at Riesenheim?

“1. What is the proportion of dark-haired students to light-haired students?

“2. How many men gain prizes for any subject which is not purely acquisitive?

“3. What is the average height of the students?

“4. Is not a very short oval form the chief shape of the head?

“5. Anything that strikes you in their social habits as being repulsive to English tastes. Don't be too voluminous on this last point. It is difficult to sift when you have lots of material, but please sift.

“I hope I am not giving you too much trouble in asking you to furnish me with the above statistics. The great object of my life is to remove the bar-sinister of Teutonic extraction which has been so long supposed to lie across the fair Attic

escutcheon of England. Pray assist me in it.

“Yours truly,

“DARRELL KINGAIRLOCH.

“If you can get the information during the next two weeks, please send it to the Athenæum Club. I am staying here examining the Leveret Papers, but shall soon be wandering about in the West of England. Early next year a new party newspaper is intended to be started by the ‘Rosicrucian.’ If all goes well, I am to be its editor. Perhaps I may then be able to offer you something it may suit you to accept.”

“Well,” mused Kit, as he slowly puffed away, “he has Germans on the brain, with a vengeance! I wonder why he hates them so! He hasn’t had to learn their confounded language! Perhaps he was snubbed in early youth by a German lady, or perhaps he’s been cut up by the German critics, or perhaps he has had to live upon sauerkraut and lager beer for awhile, or perhaps he was refused a degree

of Ph.D., or perhaps some 'high-and-well-born-and-much-to-be-respected-and-ever-enobled-by-illustrious-descent-grand-washer-man-to-the-Court' has taken the *pas* of him at a reception, or perhaps—oh, who knows? I don't. I don't believe he knows himself."

His reverie was interrupted by the entrance of Dr. Stüttmacher.

"Good morning, Mr. Mowbray. *Guten morgen!* I must apologize for coming to you rather earlier than usual—hm!—hm!—As your great Lord Nelson said, 'Punctuality is the essence of true breeding, but over-punctuality is intrusion;' but I have, at twelve, with the Grand Duke's Librarian, a consultation about some manuscripts."

"Oh, Doctor, pray don't apologize," said Kit, rising and getting his books in order. "It is for me to study your convenience, not you mine."

"Ah, *bitte!*" said the Doctor, smiling and bowing with an old-fashioned politeness full of grace and kindness. "It is a great nuisance that Otway does take this fit into his head, but he is full of strange

fancies, and no dependence is ever to be placed on him. As your great bard says, 'Canst thou cure a mind diseased?' and I do fear that is the condition of the poor man. I have spoken to him about his habits, but in vain, and I cannot send him adrift, for he is, I do think, friendless; besides, it would be difficult for me to find a better reader of Greek MSS.—it is the only intellectual study he does care about. You do have good news from home?" asked he, pointing to Kingairloch's letter.

"Excellent! but the letter I was just reading when you came in is not from home;" and Kit mentioned the name of its writer and the nature of its contents, at least so much as he could state without offence.

"Oh, I do know this Mr. Kingairloch!" said the Doctor, rather angrily. "I have heard of him when in England—a man with one idea in his head, and that an unsound one. As your great Swift says—'the man of one book is bad, but the man of one idea is worse.' But in this Mr. Kingairloch we do see the combination of the

two—a combination which is simply monomania. I hope he is not a friend of yours, however?” added the Doctor, as if recollecting himself.

Kit replied that Mr. Kingairloch was almost a stranger, and that he certainly did not share his views.

“Oh, that is good!” continued the Doctor. “But can you call a man sane who does spend his talents—for I do admit Mr. Kingairloch *has* talents—but ‘the possession of ability is one thing, its direction is another,’ as the great Hegel says—in attempting to write down such a splendid people as the Germans? the people who are, of all nations, in the very front of culture, who are the first scholars of the day—can you call such a man sane? Besides,” added the old Doctor, shrugging his shoulders contemptuously, “will all the abuse of the world affect us? As your great Bentley says, ‘no nation was ever written down but by itself;’ and as long as men—students of any subject you like—do take the works and opinions of Germans as the very foundation for their labours, so

long shall we be what we are—the first of intellectual countries; and it is because the fact is well known that we are so hated in certain literary quarters. The great Talleyrand said, ‘Nothing succeeds like success;’ but I do say, ‘Nothing creates hate like success,’ and that is the truer of the two. As for this Mr. Kingairloch drawing upon his imagination for your Attic descent, I should like to know what you Englishmen do have of the Greek in your nature?—nothing—but of the German you have everything. The Teutonic element is the paternal element in your system, natural and political. But, as the great Machiavelli says, ‘What so blind as prejudice?’ Let us therefore not waste our time in discussing its blindness. Furnish your Mr. Kingairloch with his statistics, and let him do his best. And now to study the ‘Canons against the Marriage of the Clergy.’” And the two were soon busy in reading and translating the Doctor’s lectures.

Kit at the end of a few days sent Mr. Kingairloch the statistics he required, praised the Germans to the very skies, and

attributed all the glory of England to her Teutonic connexion. He received in reply a sharp but amusing letter from the prejudiced ethnologist.

A few evenings after the receipt of this reply, Kit was sitting alone in his rooms, quietly reading the English papers. He was unable to go to the villa that night to indulge in his customary chat with Miss Lysaght and Muriel, because they had both been invited to a Grand Ducal reception, to which only the *crème de la crème* of the Duchy, and such strangers as had made their bow before their respective Sovereigns, were asked. Poor Kit not being "noble" was, of course, not thought worthy of being present at an assembly to which only the most illustrious and learned ever-to-be-admired Mayor of Riesenheim, the well-born and ever-to-be-privileged counts and barons of the Duchy, the distinguished and with all honour-worthy-to-be-endowed countesses and baronesses, the charming and bewitching-to-make-the-mouth-water young damsels of the Court, and people of that class were invited.

He did not, however, lose much. The invitation simply consisted in receiving a gracious bow from the Serene Potentate, and a sumptuous but miscellaneous refreshment of cold herrings, jams, potato salad, cold veal and plums, ginger cakes, chocolate *bon bons*, cold sausage, pickled beetroot, and the light and slightly perilous vintages of Seltzer - Wasserbrünnen. In the words of the *Riesenheimer Zeitung*, this assembly was "a Court party," and the refectation that the guests, standing like horses at a manger, were permitted to partake of, "a banquet." Had Kit been presented at his own Court, Miss Lysaght could have easily got him a card, but that piece of social etiquette my hero had not yet observed, and was therefore obliged to remain for the evening in the cold shade of Grand Ducal neglect. He had, however, seen his friends off to the Castle, and thought that Muriel had never looked more beautiful in all her life than when she entered the little drawing-room of the villa, dressed for the royal reception.

"Well," said he to himself as he handed niece and aunt into one of the Riesen-

heim flies that stood at the door. "I think I know one girl who will be peerless to-night!"

"How awfully well you look, Miss Barillon!" said he in a soft whisper to her as he arranged her wraps.

"I am *so* sorry you cannot come with us," said she, quietly. "It would have been so very nice if you could; I fear it will be dull."

"Why? Because *I* am absent?" asked he in a low voice.

"Good night! We must not keep aunty! Come early to-morrow and see us!" And the lumbering fly rolled heavily onwards.

Kit's perusal of the newspapers was soon interrupted by the entrance of Lambert. The young man had certainly been cold to Kit, owing to the favour with which he thought Mowbray was regarded by Muriel, but still a kind of acquaintance existed between the two.

"So the old cockalorum [his Serene Highness the Grand Duke] hasn't invited you? Well, you and I are in the same boat. As you are alone I thought I would ask you whether you cared to come to the

‘Pferd’ to night and see a fellow admitted into the Burschenschaft. There is an ‘Eintritts’ on to-night. It wont do for you to go back to England without seeing something of the institutions of this country—don’t you know?” Kit acquiesced partly because he wished under the circumstances to be civil to Lambert for Miss Barillon’s sake, as that young lady always treated Lambert kindly when she met him, and partly because he felt bored at being alone.

At Riesenheim there flourished two of these “Boy-clubs,” in which drinking beer and singing songs were the order of the evening. The one club, named the *Einigkeit*, assembled at an inn called the “Schloss,” whilst the other club, the “*Freiheit*,” met at an ancient hostel, yecept the “Pferd.” Between the two clubs was the bitterest hostility, and as most of the students belonged either to the one or the other, the rivalry of membership led to endless conflict.

At Riesenheim, as at every University town in Germany, the Burschenschaft was an institution based on a grave political foundation. The rules for mem-

bership were printed on a large scroll, and each student before being elected had to swear to observe them. They set forth that every member should do his utmost to advance the prosperity of the Grand Duchy of Seltzer-Wasserbrunnen, that the unity of the Fatherland should be strictly upheld, that in the event of a disruption of the German Bund by civil war, the Grand Duchy of Seltzer-Wasserbrunnen was to annex herself to the winning side, that every member of the Grand Ducal family who married into any of the families of the great Powers should be honoured as a true patriot, that in the rivalries between Austria and Prussia, it behoved the Grand Duchy to exercise her influence diplomatically, so that in the event of either of those Powers gaining the ascendancy, she could become the ally of the stronger, that any measure calculated to promote the material welfare of the Grand Duchy should be deemed lawful, that the Grand Duchy should take especial care not to be ousted from the councils of Europe by any intrigue set on foot by the neighbouring Courts of

Saxe Dummkopf, Saxe-Mindihraugen, Hesse-Kalbsbraten, Hesse-Schinken, and Maiwein-stein, and that the stranger should be allured to sojourn in the Grand Duchy and to pay its expenses. Excellent and disinterested as these rules were, they were not studied with the attention they deserved, for the Boy clubs at Riesenheim had now simply degenerated into social gatherings, where beer, songs, and nursery sports, reigned supreme.

"I don't know whether you'll enjoy yourself so much at the 'Pferd' as you seem to do at Miss Lysaght's villa," said Lambert, rather spitefully, as the two entered the doorway of the inn. "However, there'll be some good songs, and it's rather fun—but I dare say you will think it awful bosh, and so it is, especially after being accustomed to the fascinating society of Miss Barillon."

"You must think Miss Barillon's society very fascinating," said Kit, drily, "for you take remarkably good care never to go near her."

"No, thank you," answered Lambert;

“when I go to see Miss Barillon I like to see Miss Barillon—don’t care about being handed over to Miss Lysaght, as is always the case since you and she have struck up an acquaintance. Never mind, Mowbray, my boy, make the running whilst you can, for I go back to Dartvennis, and she’ll shortly return there, and then we’ll see if I don’t cut you out! She’s not a bad sort of girl—clever and all that kind of thing—but she’s too good—pious I mean: wants ‘go.’ I like a girl with lots of ‘go’ in her! Ah! here we are!” And the two passed under an archway, pushed open a rough oaken door, and entered a long room full of students, laughing, drinking, and smoking. Kit, following Lambert, walked up the room, and took his seat at a little table near a raised dais that had been fitted up at the end of the chamber. Upon this dais was a large table, on which a pair of swords placed crosswise, four large drinking horns, and two huge cans of beer were the most conspicuous objects. A tall man with an Abbot’s mitre on his head, and dressed in a flaming yellow tunic bound with black

velvet, stood by the side of the table. At his feet kneeling was a student, stripped of his coat and waistcoat, and with a handkerchief tied round his eyes.

“We’re just in time,” said Lambert; “that’s *Günst!* he’ll take the oaths, and be initiated in a moment!”

The Abbot now asked the kneeling youth a whole host of questions in a mock heroic tone. Would he stand by the Duchy? would he obey the laws of the community? would he be obedient to his superiors? &c., and as the aspiring candidate gave his replies they were caught up by the rest of the students, and formed part of a chorus that was freely sung. The youth having answered all the questions satisfactorily, was now bade to kiss the Abbot’s mitre, his ringed hand, and his foot, and then to approach the table and kiss from hilt to point the two swords. This done, two students came up and took hold of the novice, one grasping him by the shoulder and the other by the legs, and making him swing to and fro like a hammock in a storm. And now, all the students assembled, gave tongue

to a song about the glories, the virtues, and the charms of the "Freiheit," ending each verse with a "tra-la-la, a tra-la-la, and a-tra-la-la-la-lee," and accompanying the words of the chorus by deluging the oscillating youth with horns of beer. The song concluded, the saturated young man was placed on his legs, the Abbot shook hands with him cordially, kissed him on both cheeks, and then amid the cheers of the audience, pronounced "Hermann Günt a member of this honourable society." But Mr. Günt was not yet a free man, nor were his troubles at an end. He was handed over to the Captain of his mess (the "Freiheit" was portioned out into twenties, and over each twenty was a captain, who had to be strictly obeyed), and bade during the evening to drink horn after horn of beer without stopping, in order to accustom himself to the libations of the community, these libations ranging from twelve to even fifty horns of beer imbibed by each student in an evening. The beast—I beg the brute-creation's pardon—I mean the "man" who could drink more

than the rest was appointed the Abbot or President for the term. No wonder the young Teuton gets fat and unhealthy, and has to betake himself early to spectacles, when he passes much of his youth in turning himself into a beer vat.

After Mr. Günt's installation, a chair-race took place down the whole length of the room; each student sitting on a chair placed in single file, *rode it* with arms and legs as hard as he could to the goal. The object of each of these nursery jockeys was to "bump" and upset his rival in front of him, and then gain his place. Every man who was upset had to pay his vanquisher a forfeit of six horns of beer, whilst the jockey who came in last was fined heavily, both in malt and tobacco. The duffers were put in the van, whilst the clever ones took up the rear. As Kit looked on at this silly sport, he fancied he was in some nursery of a larger growth, and not in the society of men who in a few months would be officers in the army, ministers in the Lutheran Church, physicians and surgeons, clerks in the public offices, barristers, jägers and the like. If

the sports of children satisfy the child, there was no lack of children at the 'Varsity of Riesenheim.

The chief features of the evening's amusement, however, were the songs. These were sung with the most exquisite feeling, and with that perfect harmony which makes the Germans the first of all musical nations. One song well known throughout the Fatherland, as the 'Student's Hymn,' specially struck Kit. It was sung first by the Abbot, and then repeated by the whole room as a chorus. The way in which the Abbot's rich tenor voice trolled out the following words was well worth going miles to hear.

*"Vita nostra brevis est, brevi finietur,
Venit Mors velociter,
Rapit nos atrociter,
Nemini parcetur, nemini parcetur.*

*"Vivat academia, vivant professores,
Vivat membrum quodlibet,
Vivant membra quælibet,
Semper sint in flore, semper sint in flore."*

Whilst Kit was watching the proceedings and listening to this song of the evening, he noticed at a side-table not far from him, his poor maniac of a tutor, Otway. The

man was companionless, and talking loud to himself; before him was a large tumbler which contained, not the mild beer of the Duchy, but the deadly opal *absinthe*, the drink which has done more to madden and paralyse humanity than all the cunning brews besides. He was evidently very much intoxicated, and in a state of semi-stupor. A few of the students had at first begun to jeer at him, and to pelt him with bits of tobacco pipe, and to try to rouse him by rocking his chair, but finding that he took no notice of their movements beyond leering at them with that painfully vacant smile of the drunkard, they left him alone in his glory and mingled with the sports at the other end of the room.

Kit and Lambert, who did not care about the row occasioned by the chair-races, sat apart from the mass of the students, quietly enjoying their smoke and the echo of the songs. By that magnetic attraction which causes eyes that are gazed at to return the gaze, Otway suddenly raised his head and encountered the scrutiny of Kit. The look at once sobered him. He sat upright in his

chair and tried by an effort to collect himself. Gradually, he seemed to master the fog in which his senses were enveloped, and passed his hand over his brow as if struggling to recollect something. And then like lightning, memory as it were came to his aid. He started to his feet, and in the most violent and excited manner joined in the chorus of the student's hymn. "Vita nostra brevis est" he shouted as he approached Kit, "brevis finietur!"

"Hallo, Otway!" said Lambert, coolly, "you are drunk, as usual. Don't kick up that row: Mowbray and I want to listen to the song, not to you."

"Why—won't—listen to me?" asked the man, stuttering in his speech, and staggering in his gait. "I can sing—why, can't sing?—*shall* sing."

But unfortunately whilst the fellow expressed his resolution to join in the chorus, he staggered and partly fell on Kit. Kit, indignant at the fellow's awkwardness, and perhaps with rather more roughness than he need have done, threw him off, and he fell heavily to the ground. Most of the

students were at the other end of the room watching the finish of the chair-race, so that the scene did not create any attention; besides these kind of brawls were as common as jealousies between ex-Lord Chancellors.

*"Vita nostra brevis est, brevi finietur,
Venit Mors velociter,"*

sang the students, bumping away with their chairs.

"Venit Mors velociter!" cried Otway, staggering to his feet and white with rage uncontrollable. In the twinkling of an eye he had seized one of the swords that lay on the green-baize table and rushed upon Kit, who had given the fellow not another thought and was quietly watching the end of the chair-race. Aiming his blow at the head of my hero, Otway might have brained him outright, but the maniac, owing to his uncertain grasp and unsteady gait, accidentally lowered his sword, and thus pierced Kit—who, on a scream of warning given by the paralysed Lambert—had risen at once in self-defence—in the breast. For a moment Kit staggered, then he threw up his arms

and fell on his face. So quickly did the deed take place that interference was impossible. It was not till Kit lay weltering in his blood that the students were aware of the act that the wretched drunkard had committed.





CHAPTER IV.

ICH LIEBE!

TWO days after the affair just related Muriel was busying herself cutting off the dead leaves of the few plants that adorned the villa garden and wondering the while why Kit had not made his accustomed appearance. She was interrupted in her work by a voice saying, "Good morning Miss Barillon!" Turning round she met Lambert.

"Oh, good morning, Mr. Lambert!" replied she, smiling, "you have been quite a stranger lately."

"Well, I dare say my absence has not been *very* much missed," said Lambert sarcastically, and switching a shrub with a cane.

"Why should you say that? I am sure we are always glad to welcome you when you

give us the opportunity—friends at home when met abroad should become doubly friends, they say.”

“So it appears,” replied Lambert, drily; “but there are exceptions to every rule: my case is the exception.”

“You have only yourself to thank then, Mr. Lambert,” said Muriel, smiling, “I suppose you don’t want to be friends? We cannot do more than invite you, and if you choose to refuse, why the estrangement lies with you and not with us.”

“I am sure I have no wish to be estranged from you,” said the young man; “down in Limeshire you and I were always good friends and I should have liked the same state of things to have continued here.”

“And pray why do you not choose to be good friends here?” asked Muriel quietly, as she wiped her scissors on the fingers of her gauntlet gloves.

“You know best, Miss Barillon,” said Lambert, gravely.

“I know best?” asked Muriel, astonished. “Why, what have I done to prevent it?”

“Nothing!” replied Lambert, laconically,

and sitting down on the shafts of a neighbouring wheelbarrow. "She plays the *ingénue* very well," muttered he to himself; "let us see whether she is so sweet on this fellow Mowbray as I fancy!"

"You have heard about the accident to Mowbray, I suppose?" he began suddenly and looking straight at his companion.

"Accident! the accident to Mr. Mowbray! what accident?" asked Muriel, her face getting pale, and her whole frame betraying an anxiety she was unable to suppress.

"She *does* love him then!" muttered Lambert.

"What were you saying about Mr. Mowbray? We have heard nothing," said Muriel, feverishly.

"Oh, it is not much, I dare say; fellows often make a fuss about nothing. Only these German doctors bungle everything so, and there is no doubt about its being a badish accident." And then he briefly told her what we already know—leaving out, however, the little fact that he had been by Mowbray's side when the accident occurred.

"What has been done to Mr. Otway for

this atrocious act?" asked Muriel, indignantly.

"Done! Poor fellow! he's done for himself, I should think. He is in the Erzhalle, a raving maniac, and his recovery is almost hopeless," answered Lambert.

Muriel was silent for a moment, then with trembling lips she said, "And how is Mr. Mowbray now?"

"Oh, not so bad as one would expect. I saw him this morning—he is perfectly conscious and not in any pain; the doctors say that he will have to keep quiet for some time, and hope for the best—only they fear some complication may arise which may make matters worse."

"I sincerely trust not. I hope he is comfortably attended upon—it is so miserable to be ill away from home? Will you ask him from me whether there is anything we can do for him? We shall be so very glad to be of service to him. Will you be seeing him again soon?"

"Oh, yes, when I get back if you like. Why?"

"Would you take him some fruit from us

and say we shall send every day to hear how he is; and if he can write us a line now and then telling us how he progresses, we should be *so* glad. Will you do that? I shall be so much obliged to you."

"Oh yes, with pleasure."

"And you must come and see us oftener than you have done lately, Mr. Lambert. I suppose you will be allowed to see Mr. Mowbray every day?"

"Oh, I should think so—only I am going away myself in a few days—going back to England."

"Are you? I am so sorry," said Muriel.

"Because I shall thus be prevented from coming and giving you my daily bulletin of Mr. Mowbray?" said Lambert, drily. "Your regret is not very flattering to me. Well, I suppose," added he, turning the conversation, "we shall soon see you also in Limeshire?"

"In about another month, I think. How long will it be before Mr. Mowbray will be able to go about?"

"Oh, in a few weeks, I should say. I hope Mr. Barillon is quite well? I had a

letter from home a few days ago in which I was told that he had been suffering from the gout."

"Oh, papa has perfectly recovered now, thanks ; indeed he is better than ever. Do you think Mr. Mowbray would like me to send him some flowers ? they brighten up a sick room so ! Will you ask him ?"

"Of course his answer will be 'yes.' How glad you will be to get back to Limeshire again, wont you ? I hope you'll be there for the archery meetings. I am going to live at Dartvennis regularly now, and intend to take up archery myself. What a capital meeting that Lowderham one always is !"

"Yes, very good. Of course Dr. Stüttmacher sees that Mr. Mowbray has the best medical advice in the place. They say that Dr. Walpole, the physician just come from New York, is so good ; by far the best in Riesenheim. Please tell Mr. Mowbray to see him ; every one speaks so highly of him."

"I will. Did you know that my father has just bought a new place near Lyme Regis ? Oh, here is Miss Lysaght !"

"You will stay to luncheon now that you are here? and afterwards I will give you the fruit for Mr. Mowbray. I *do* hope he will soon recover!"

The accident to Kit was anything but a trifling matter. The sword thrust was deeper than had been expected, and the exact state of the injuries inflicted was not at first easily ascertained. However, the doctors were unanimous that, provided inflammation did not set in, there was no absolute danger. Fortunately for Kit, he was free from pain, and though weak and prostrate from the loss of blood, experienced no positive discomfort. He begged Dr. Stüttmacher not to communicate with his parents unless it should turn out to be absolutely necessary. An affair like this would worry the Canon out of his life. With the sanguine disposition of youth Kit hoped that he should soon pull through and disappoint the fears entertained by his advisers. For a time his state was far more perilous than he was aware of. Day after day he was carefully watched, and every measure adopted which human skill could

suggest to prevent the dreaded inflammation.

At the end of ten days he was pronounced out of danger; the wound had been carefully examined, and was found to be progressing most favourably, whilst the surrounding regions were free from anything that could occasion anxiety. Still three long weary weeks had to elapse before he was allowed to rise from his bed and hobble round his room on a crutch. The time seemed all the longer and more tedious because he wanted to pay his wonted visits to the Villa. He did not mind how seedy he felt provided he could only be wheeled along to the garden he knew so well, and once more hear the sweet voice of Muriel, and be invigorated by the healthy presence of her society. But he was under strict orders, and forbidden as yet to take the air. At last he was told that in another week, provided the day was bright and sunny, he might issue forth for an hour. How he longed for that week to pass! "I am very much better," he wrote to Miss Lysaght, "and they tell me that in another week I

may go out in an invalid chair. After all the kindness I have received from you, you may be sure that the first visit I shall pay will be to the Villa. Except that I am naturally a little paler and thinner, I do not think my illness has much changed me. Pray thank Miss Barillon for sending me those delicious grapes ; they were excellent. Also tell her, please, that I am reading hard at the 'Thirty Years' War' she was good enough to send me."

Perhaps what did Kit more good at this time than all the drugs in the pharmacopœia, was the attention he received from the inmates of the Villa. Not a day passed without Miss Lysaght sending inquiries after him, and occasionally writing him a little note, wishing to know whether she could be of any service. Sometimes—and those were days to be marked with white chalk—he would receive a basket of grapes, or a few peaches, or an exquisite bouquet from Muriel. On three several occasions she had accompanied her gifts by inserting amongst them a little scrap of note-paper, with a few words written in pencil. As

literary compositions they were not very striking: "I hope you will like these peaches. I got them in the Markt-Platz this morning. We are *so* glad to hear you are much better.—M. B." "We were up at the Grand Duke's yesterday and bought some of his grapes from the gardener—a privilege he allows only to his guests. Of course we thought of *you* when we got them. I send you my copy of Schiller, with the difficult words in English in the margin." "This is the *very* last bouquet I shall send you. In another week I hope to give one into your own hands. What an age it seems since we have seen you!—Muriel." There was nothing, as I have said, very striking in these curt epistles; nothing calculated to reflect much literary fame upon their fair author. But as men treasure up every relic belonging to their loves—as Dante kept store by the gift of his Beatrice, as Petrarch worshipped the auburn lock of his Laura, as Waller enshrined in his breast the satin slipper of his "Saccharissa," as Swift guarded the *souvenirs* of Vanessa, as Pope idolized the ribbon

which had once encircled the neck of fair Martha Blount, as we all have made fools of ourselves under similar conditions—so Kit regarded as sacred those three scraps of paper which bore the handwriting of his love. Every word they contained was engraven upon his heart; every line he had read and re-read till the paper from incessant folding and unfolding was dirty and crumpled, and on the verge of dissolution. He would not have parted with those precious lines for all the wealth of “Ormus or of Ind.” They came to him from Muriel! They were penned by her fair hand! they showed that she had not forgotten him! nay, they showed that she was even interested in him! Ah, what a dear girl she was; and then he kissed for the hundredth time the almost illegible lines. How he longed to see her again, and how he murmured at the speed of Time’s leaden wings. But one week more! Haste on, old man with the scythe; mow down the intervening days! cut along!

Yes, there was no doubt about it now: deep into the innermost chambers of Kit’s

susceptible heart Cupid had twanged every arrow in his quiver. No need to make that organ a target any longer. The young man was in love, all the more feverishly and passionately owing to the last few weeks' enforced absence from the object of his love. Hardly a thought crossed his mind which was entirely disconnected with Muriel; and hour by hour, now with the hope of sanguine youth, and then with its sensitive forebodings, he would draw mental pictures of the future, in which Muriel and he absorbed every inch of the canvas. And thus between the hopes that memory encouraged him to cherish and the fears that doubt ever presented, the days of his convalescence passed slowly on.

At last the day arrived when, for the first time for some six weeks, he was allowed to breathe the fresh air of heaven. An invalid chair was at the door, and leaning on the arm of Dr. Stüttmacher, whose kindly presence had enlivened many a weary hour in Kit's sick chamber, he descended the staircase.

"I do think I know, my young friend, whither you go to-day," smiled the old

Doctor, as he put Kit in the chair and covered him with wraps. "As your great Congreve does say, 'Love is never so tell-tale as when it tries to escape detection.'"

"Pray who has tried to escape detection?" asked Kit, laughing.

"Both of you," nodded the old man significantly. "Both of you! but it was by all in vain—all in vain! I do not know experience—no, that affliction has at least been spared me!" said he, smiling, "but I have seen a good deal of it in my time—a good deal of it!" And he put his head knowingly on one side, like a man who is not to be imposed upon.

"A good deal of what, Herr Doctor?" asked Kit, puzzled.

"Of love, my young friend," said the old man, tenderly; "and you are a fortunate fellow. Ah, do not pretend to be indifferent! Do you not think that when that charming lady with her beautiful niece came here to ask after you that I did not see what——"

"But did Miss Lysaght and Miss Barillon ever come here to inquire after me?" asked Kit, astonished.

“Yes, very often; and more than once I have seen the tear—like the dew upon the violet, as your beautiful poet Campbell says—stand in the eye of the graceful young lady who did ask after you and did hope that you suffered no pain.”

“But I never knew they came here.”

“No, I did not tell you because I did think it would make you impatient to return their visits, and impatience is the enemy of convalescence. But go now whither the finger-posts of your heart do direct! Happy boy—you no sooner do recover from one fever than you do throw yourself into another! Go to your beauty—talk nonsense and think it conversation! I go to see the poor maniac!”

“And is his case really hopeless?” asked Kit.

“I do in very truth fear so,” replied the old man, sadly, “so fine an intellect to be brought so low!—to wither at the top, as did say your bitter Swift! Farewell! Ah, what is this? A letter.” And a lad brought a note which he handed to the Doctor.

“It is for you, my friend,” said the

Doctor, giving it to Kit. He tore it eagerly open for he recognised the writing of Miss Lysaght. Alas! its contents were indeed bitter disappointment. Miss Lysaght said that they had just received a telegram from Mr. Barillon desiring them to return at once to England.

“By the time you get this we shall have started, as we have to be at Frankfort by 12 to meet a Colonel Henderson who is to escort us home. Had it been possible Muriel and I would have made a point of coming to see you and bidding you farewell; but such leave-taking, owing to the suddenness of our departure was out of the question. We both sincerely trust that you will be speedily restored to perfect health and never be any the worse for the sad accident which has, to our great regret, interrupted for the last few weeks the pleasant period of our acquaintanceship. Muriel begs me to give you her kindest regards.

“Yours very sincerely,

“MARIA LYSAGHT.”

"I scribble this P.S.

"I am *so* sorry after having waited *so long* that at the *very last* moment we should be disappointed at not seeing you. How I have been looking forward to meet you! And now this *cruel* telegram comes! When you have *passed* your examination you must *not* forget your invitation to Royston. Don't neglect your German because *I* am not by to superintend your studies. *Leben sie wohl!*
MURIEL."

It was a grievous disappointment, so bitter that it almost threw him back. The young man felt most keenly the absence of his friends—all the more so because he had pictured such happy scenes of reunion. Both the present and the future were so blank that the only way of making them endurable was by thinking of the past. Now that Muriel was away, how stale, flat, and unprofitable was Riesenheim! Kit hated the place, and longed for the hour when he should be able to quit it. But thoughts of Muriel made him work, and he stuck to his books as if they were

the only refuge he had to save him from despair. One morning he received an envelope, and in it a small water-colour sketch of a country house in the middle of a park. Beneath the drawing was written, "Royston, sketch by M. B., Sept. 10, 18—. A souvenir." After the receipt of this sketch, Kit began to recover his spirits, and to look upon life with a far less jaundiced eye. When we are in love how little it takes to make us miserable, and how little to make us happy !

And so the autumn passed on, and winter with his cruel touch was beginning to mar the fair face of nature. The waters of the Rhine, swollen by the rains and molten snows, no longer rushed, clear and blue, beneath the antique timbered bridge of Riesenheim, but, dull and muddy, swept on to the sea. The tall lime trees had shed their russet leaves, and with bared and blighted branches stood out cold and naked against the steel-like sky. The distant crest of the Finstern Gebirge was topped with snow, and the furrows that seamed their sides were now the channels for cas-

cade and streamlet. Hill and dale, field and flood, were evidently being rapidly enfolded in the austere embrace of a German winter. The guests and visitors had departed from the town, and the bubbling springs of the different *brunnen*—how many a tumbler had they filled for their fair votaries?—were now carefully boarded and padlocked until the ensuing season. The band had left the deserted promenade, and now only performed in the sheltered haunts of the Winter Garten. The flat-bottomed punts on the Adle and the Rhine no longer floated idly, anchored by the banks, but were housed safe and dry in the thatched sheds by the river side. The students, bidding good-bye to summer sports, were now looking up and furbishing their skates and sledges. In many a house the windows were being carefully listed, and the big white stoves were crackling with the huge log fires within. The shops were full of warm and tempting goods, which lacked not purchasers. Yes, winter was at hand, and those who had felt his icy grasp knew that it was as well to be prepared to greet him.

Kit by no means relished the prospect of having to suffer the rigour and seclusion of such a season in Germany. He was beginning seriously to think of returning to England, and of attempting at all hazards to face his Examiners, when he received the following letter, which decided him at once—

“Board of Conventions, Whitehall,

“Nov. 20, 18—.

“SIR,—I am requested by the Lord President to inform you that it is considered desirable that the vacancy to which his Lordship has appointed you be now filled up. An examination is to be held for this Department on the 10th of next December, by the Civil Service Commissioners, at which his Lordship hopes that you will feel yourself sufficiently qualified to attend.

“I have the honour to remain, Sir,

“Your obedient and humble servant,

“ALGERNON UPTON.

“Christopher Mowbray, Esq.”

Accompanying this official letter were a few lines from Scrope advising Kit to return. “The examination is but a mild

affair," he wrote, "and you are sure to pass. A few remarks have got into the papers about this vacancy having been kept open so long, which it is better to avoid. Lord Salamis never condescends to take notice of anything in the newspapers which reflect upon himself or his department, and so far as he is concerned you might live where you are for another year, but the Assistant Secretaries think it as well that you should get into harness before Christmas."

Kit at once acted upon his order, and I need enter into no details. He bade Dr. Stüttmacher a cordial farewell, and received that learned scholar's blessing and best wishes, as also a complete edition of his works. Before leaving he tried to see Hawtrey, or rather, as he was still called, Otway; but it was impossible, as the poor fellow was still under strict confinement, and grave apprehensions were entertained as to his ever being restored to sanity. On his return to England, Kit made his appearance at the due time before the Examiners, and, I am happy to say, perfectly satisfied them so far as German translation was concerned;

his German composition was deemed indifferent, but as he more than made up the balance by his knowledge of German conversation, he gained his pass certificate with ease. About the other subjects he had to take up, there had never been a question as to his competency.

You may be sure that there was no little joy in the household of the Canon when they read, among the extracts of the *London Gazette*, quoted in the *Times*, that "Mr. Christopher Mowbray, B.A., has been appointed a Junior Examiner of Conventions."





CHAPTER V.

THE BOARD OF CONVENTIONS.

I SUPPOSE in these days of Civil Service agitation, when that branch of the Queen's Government is such an object of interest to Liberal politicians, extortionate tradesmen, and ambitious middle-class England, that it is almost superfluous to say anything touching that great department of the Stateyclept the Board of Conventions. There are few, indeed, in the slightest degree acquainted with the machinery of political life, who are not familiar with the name of that distinguished and much coveted bureau, for distinguished and much coveted it certainly is. In spite of the rapid inroads made upon Privilege by the Radicalism

of the present day; in spite of the march of that great ogre, Competition; and in spite of the axe now being laid so vigorously at the root of Patronage, the Board of Conventions still safely rears its head, a standing monument of exclusiveness and a living protest against reform. Other Government departments have had to bow their heads in submission, to open their portals to all comers, to hand over their snug sinecures, and to be no longer the perquisites of a coterie, but the property of the nation. Not so "the Board." Manfully it has held its own, and successfully resisted the tide which has swamped its *confrères*. Member after member has moved for an inquiry into the special character of the organization of the Board, but the motion has always fallen to the ground. Its estimates, whenever they come before the House, are angrily discussed, opposed, and debated, but passed. An indignant cheap press is ever showing it up, writing it down, sitting upon it generally, but, as if to show the weakness of the fourth

estate, all in vain. There stands "the Board" as it always has stood, and, in all probability, ever will stand until the seldom quoted New Zealander arrives and takes its photograph from the ruins of the Thames Embankment. The secret of this marvellous endurance is certainly to be found in the conduct of the different Lords President of Conventions. Each successive chief, no matter what be his political principles, no sooner takes his seat in that large dark wainscoted room of the Board, overlooking St. James's Park, than instinctively he resolves "to maintain the old system." Members may talk, Committees may inquire, the press may howl, but firmly he vows that never shall the thin end of the wedge of reform try to squeeze its way into *his* department.

"Never," he cries, indignantly, "shall a man who has only brains and a baptismal certificate, be appointed as one of *our* officials! Never shall outside influence interfere with *our* rules and regulations. Never shall patronage be exercised within *our* walls otherwise than former precedent

has sanctioned. Never shall anything be introduced likely to subvert the secrecy of *our* constitution. Never ! no, never !”

Nor is this indignation aught in the eyes of the different Lords President but right and proper, for they state that the Board, from the very nature of its work, is a highly secret department, and therefore most dangerous to be thrown open to any educated middle-class lad, who might sell the information he had acquired to the very first newspaper which took the trouble to bribe him. It is far more important, these chiefs say, that the Junior Examiners of the Board should be, in the best social sense of the word, “gentlemen,” than that they should be geniuses, and as it is a law of the department that no Junior Examiner can be appointed who has not taken his degree either at Oxford or Cambridge, there is sufficient security that any candidate who takes his place at “the Board” shall not be incompetent.

“The present system works well,” says each Lord President after a few days of

official experience, "and reform is not only unnecessary, but unwise."

There are some, however, amongst the outside public who still assert that reform is both wise and necessary, very necessary in the present state of the country. Irish members of Parliament wish to know why a man who has taken his degree, not at Oxford or at Cambridge, but at Dublin or the Queen's Colleges, should be excluded from the Board; it is an insult to Ireland. Scotch members, in like manner, wish to know why a man who has taken his degree at Aberdeen or St. Andrew's should be excluded; it is an insult to Scotland. Dissenting members wish to know why men who have taken their degrees at the London University—they assure the House there is such a place—should be eschewed; it is an insult to the Nonconformists. Wealthy mercantile members wish to know why it should be supposed that men born in the middle-classes of life should not be equally as sensitive with regard to honour as those who by the accident of their birth are socially

superior; the supposition is an insult to the country. Then economical members, whose hobby is "reduction," want to know why a Junior Examiner of Conventions begins on three hundred and fifty pounds a year, when a clerk in the War Office begins only on a hundred; whilst, on the other hand, "independent" members, whose hobby is annihilation, want to know why there should be a Board of Conventions at all; why doesn't the Foreign Office do the work? And so on. But, as I have said, all the moaning and groaning has resulted in nothing; "the Board" is still the Board, dignified, exclusive, aristocratic,—the All Souls of the Civil Service. One, and only one, surrender has it made to public opinion—each candidate appointed by the Lord President having to pass a test examination before the Civil Service Commissioners.

But the manner of appointing to the Board of Conventions is not the only matter cavilled at—people grumble also at the nature of its duties. What is the use of the office? What does it do? How does

it account for its vast expenditure? and the like, are questions incessantly raised by the inquisitive. And then some man who thinks himself a wag replies, "Oh, don't you know what it does? I'll tell you. Suppose you have some pressing business there which requires immediate attention, you visit the Board, walk upstairs, and from eleven till one you are referred from room A to room B, and so on, all down the alphabet. When you have got to Z, you find the occupant of the room away at lunch; you take a chair, and admire the almanac on the chimney-piece until two, when a very polite, well-bred, well-dressed gentleman arrives, regrets you have had to wait, thinks there is going to be a change in the weather—hopes so, at least—and then desires you to fill up a form and call this day three months. At the end of three months you return, introduce yourself again to the polite, well-bred, well-dressed gentleman, who still thinks there is going to be a change in the weather, and regrets that the little matter you have called about 'is no longer in his department,' refers you

to room A, and so on. I know a man who has been five years trying to get a question answered, and it is not answered yet; meanwhile he has completely lost the use of his lower limbs, from being incessantly referred from one room to the other. Excellent department 'the Board!'—if knowledge of reference be knowledge itself, its officials are about the most learned men I know!" This kind of waggery is very offensive, and should not be encouraged.

Let us pay a visit to this important Department of State, ascend its wide stone steps, pass through its swinging doors, traverse its long corridors, and enter one of the rooms inhabited by certain of its junior officials. It is a low, attic sort of apartment, with three small windows looking on to St. James's Park. A thick Turkey carpet, very dusty and much the worse for wear, partially covers its worm-eaten boards. A few writing-tables, furnished with pigeon-holes, slopes, cane-trays, &c., and groaning beneath a mass of blue books, parliamentary papers, and official documents, are placed at

various angles so as to command the light and avoid the draught. Several oak-chairs, covered with very ragged Morocco, stand against the walls, more, it would appear, for their own support than for any other purpose. A big almanac, very much marked and written upon, is picturesquely supported upon the mantelpiece by two water-bottles and a letter-weight. Some briar-root pipes, a few cigars, and several pink boxes of cigarettes, also adorn the mantelpiece. There are a few ragged and dilapidated tables about the room, on which are certain ledgers and office journals. The apartment, on the whole, does not, therefore, strike one as very luxurious, and the stranger is apt, after a few visits, to come to the conclusion that whatever be the immense expenditure of the Board complained of by its enemies, not much of its funds are wasted in the supply of furniture for its junior officials.

There is evidently not a great pressure of business at this present moment, or, if there be, it is of such a nature as can afford to wait. Conversation and the encouragement of private tastes appear to have taken

the place of the graver labours of official life. And as this is to be the room in which Kit will be initiated into his important duties, permit me to introduce a few of its members.

The tall man standing on the hearth-rug, inspecting a sheet of trousers' patterns, held out to him by an obsequious gentleman in black, is Mr. Pemberton, the head of the room. He is not bad looking; tall and slim, with thick curly hair, sleepy eyes, a beaky nose, and a light drooping moustache and imperial. Among his friends he is generally known as Dick—why, cannot be ascertained, since his name is Henry, and there has never been a Richard in the family. However, everybody calls him Dick, and usually after a very brief acquaintance, for he is genial and cheery, and just the kind of man to whom elderly maiden aunts would leave their money. I may say that he entertains such expectations. A dandy as to dress, a loungeur as to gait, a drawler as to conversation, he is nevertheless, according to the opinion of his "pals," "all there when the bell

rings," which may be interpreted into his being no fool, and that when opportunity offers itself he knows quite as well as his neighbours how to take advantage of it. Indeed, he is *not* a fool. The younger son of a country squire, with a large family and a mortgaged property, ever since he left Trinity some five years ago, Dick has had to be dependent pretty much on his own resources. And they have not treated him badly. A political friend got him one of the junior examinations, and though Mr. Pemberton *père* only pays his son's wine and tailors' bills, the Parliamentary returns show a keen-eyed public that Mr. Richard Pemberton, of the Board of Conventions, is in the annual receipt of £475 14s. 6½d.; yet Dick's annual expenditure is never at the least less than a thousand.

In these days of ostentation, it is not very easy to calculate your neighbour's income, but it stands to reason that a young man cannot belong to three clubs, keep a stanhope, have good chambers in St. James's Street, besides being always

in the possession of ready money for travelling, club dinners, opera boxes, theatres, and the various exigencies of society, on something like four hundred a year—*Cela va sans dire*; and “though how the deuce Dick lives” is a puzzle to some of his friends, he is not in debt, is never in difficulties, and has never had a word breathed against his honour.

Perhaps that little book he studies so carefully before going to bed every night could let us into the secret of his domestic ways and means. A magnificent shot—cool as Nova Zembla, and steady as the Eddystone—his winnings at the Gun Club at Hurlingham and at Baden-Baden; what with backing himself, entering himself for all sweepstakes and laying against duffers—must in themselves be a small fortune. A cautious player at whist, and a nightly attendant at the card-room of his chief club, the end of the year generally sees him some three hundred to the good. He is a splendid billiard player, and makes it pay. With a large acquaintance amongst men in town, his five-hundred-pound book on the Derby

has never yet gone wrong. Having supreme confidence in his own prowess, he is always ready to back himself to walk, ride, run, or do anything on which men will stake their money; and he seldom fails to land the coin. And so, what with cards, betting, playing at pool, pigeon-shooting, occasional steeple-chasing, and casual "flutters" in the city, Henry Staveley Pemberton, Esq., of Her Majesty's Board of Conventions, manages to eke out a goodish livelihood. That he might turn his skill and ability to better account, is not for me to say.

The dark, closely-shaved man with the Napoleonic nose and moustache seated on the window-sill, with his legs in the drawer of his bureau, reading a novel, is Berkeley de Bohun. Being the younger son of a Tory peer, he is, of course, an out-and-out Radical, and holds the extremest opinions about the utility of the House of Lords, the existence of a State Church, the Game Laws, and the Land question. Having the *entrée*, both from his own birth and from his sisters' marriages, into the very best

society that London can offer, he declines to make the slightest use of his advantages, and voluntarily remains in social exclusion. He is a member of the "Kemble" and the "Coterie," and prefers club dinners and boon companionship to all the fascinations of the fashionable world. Of ladies he knows very little, but, like young Marlowe, is better acquainted with society of another description. He is a great theatrical goer, and when in town never misses putting in an appearance on first nights, and critically abusing the performances. The opera and the French plays are his two most cherished objects of adoration; during the season, when he is not at the one house, he is sure to be at the other. He is not given to sport or severe exercise of any kind, but when he asks you to dinner you can be certain of your host—a more consummate *gourmet* does not exist. There is a frankness about all his weaknesses and failings which, to a certain extent, disarms criticism. He tells you always in forcible language what he likes and dislikes, and makes no pretence of a reserve of any kind on any subject

whatever. For a man of Bohemian tastes he is well read, knows a good deal about music, a little about art, and has an extensive acquaintance with general literature. He can talk and think sensibly enough when he chooses, and were he not so unblushing a Sybarite and so incessant a grumbler there might be some chance of his making a name in the world, but at present his epicurean tastes entirely block up the road to fame. Having lived much abroad, and regarding Paris as the only civilized spot on the habitable globe, he looks at everything from a Parisian point of view. He curses England roundly from head to foot — its climate, its Government, its national tastes, its burlesque of art, its social customs—everything, in fact. “It’s the damndest place under the sun,” he always winds up with, when grumbling at the impossibility of ever dining *al fresco*, or the want of taste Englishwomen display in their dress, or at our absence of artistic and histrionic talent, or at our Puritanism, or the boredom engendered by our conventionalities. Let us hope that the Honourable Berkeley

de Bohun may never know a "damnder place" than the country he loves to abuse.

The fair-haired man amusing himself by making a little brown terrier worry a dead mouse wrapped up in a parliamentary paper is Charley Foote, an excellent mimic, a beautiful waltzer, and at all times an invaluable social acquisition. He possesses but one fault—an inveterate habit of offering to bet on any subject that may come up for discussion. So confirmed is this habit that if you decline to back your opinion he jumps at once to the conclusion that you are not speaking the truth. Otherwise, he is a charming and estimable colleague.

The short burly-looking man seated at his bureau eating oysters, and assisting the process of digestion by occasionally casting a shell at Charley Foote's terrier, is Lumley, the literary man of the room, and politely nicknamed "the liner." He is as yet unknown to fame, though certainly from no fault of his. He has written a biography, a couple of educational works, some children's stories, a volume of pious essays, an

improper novel, but in vain—the lucrative arrangement of “half profits” has not as yet added much to his fortunes. Meanwhile, till a cold public encourages further efforts, he amuses himself by writing leaders in the *White Flag*, a Conservative journal, and contradicting them in the *Banner*, a Radical paper. Impartiality is a judicial gift which Mr. Lumley possesses in a great degree.

Such are the four gentlemen who shortly will be the colleagues of my hero.

“By Jove!” said Pemberton, dismissing his tailor, and seating himself in a cane chair near the fire, whilst he unfolded the *Times*, “what luck some fellows have! Here’s Calthorpe, who was only two years my senior at Trinity, a county court judge. Gad, I wish I had gone into a profession!”

“Oh, a Government office is a perfect hell upon earth as regards advancement—it’s the damndest career out!” said De Bohun, looking up from his novel for a moment.

“And no matter how hard a fellow works, too!” said Foote, putting the dead

mouse into a Wellington boot for the terrier to extract. "That's the discouraging point. If it hadn't been for my sense of principle, it would have taken the starch out of my zeal a long while ago."

"Oh, the only thing for a fellow to do is to go in for private work," said Lumley, beginning to correct his proofs. "By the way, is it true that Seaton is seedy again?"

"Oh, who believes in Seaton's seediness?" said Pemberton; "it's always the way with those men who are constantly complaining, they last for ever. Seaton has disappointed me so often," laughed he, "that I have given him up as a bad job. I believe he's as immortal as Tithonus! I wish the deuce he would resign or do something, though; I want to get into my next class. What an awful time it's been since we have had any vacancies!"

"They tell me that Seaton is really bad this time," said Foote, kicking away the terrier and Wellington boot and seating himself at his bureau. "Got the gout awful bad!"

"Where?" asked De Bohun, hastily skimming the pages of his novel.

"Where!" exclaimed Foote; "how the mischief do I know where? Mrs. Seaton writes to say that her husband is laid up with a severe attack of the gout, and unable to attend to his official duties. We couldn't very well write back and inquire in what part he got it—looks so greedy! Though we do live, 'in this infernal country,' De Bohun, we must pay some attention to the little politenesses of life, you know!"

"Oh, an ordinary attack of gout is nothing," said De Bohun, contemptuously; "it's when it gets into the stomach, that's the thing! I don't believe that there's another place in the world where men live so long as they do in this accursed hole! In France you get an epidemic once in every five years; what the deuce do we ever get here? Nothing. The country is overcrowded, and yet a fellow never gets a chance!"

"I'll bet you Seaton has to resign," said Foote.

"Resign!—not he."

"Well; will you bet?"

"No," said De Bohun, gruffly.

"Ah, there you are! I hate a fellow who is always so positive, and yet declines to back himself," said Foote. "In my opinion, that's contemptible."

"I never knew you have an opinion that wasn't contemptible," replied De Bohun, shying down the novel.

"Worth reading?" asked Dick, picking up the volume.

"No, awful rot! Novels are like faded beauties—well got up, but full of humbug when you study 'em. Don't shake your head, Lumley; there's nothing in it."

"You seem rather bilious to-day, De Bohun. Anything the matter?" asked Lumley.

"Enough to make a fellow bilious," growled the Honourable, "here are all my people at Nice writing about blue skies and bright sunshine, and I've got to winter in this damnation climate, where, if you don't get rheumatism from the rain, you get consumption from the fogs. Sink the place!"

"Hallo! B.B.," cried out Dick; "I thought a minute ago you were complaining that fellows lived so awfully long in this climate that it stopped promotion?"

"And so they do live awfully long," said De Bohun, savagely; "can't a fellow live long, though he's racked with rheumatism or only got one lung? Look at all the men in the office: how many of 'em are sound, I should like to know? and yet they look like living! Why, there hasn't been a vacancy amongst the seniors for the last—I don't know when. There's Hetherington! they all said, five years ago, that he wouldn't last, and here he is as fit as a fiddle."

"Oh, don't let us go into that subject again," said Lumley. "I'm sick of the whole thing. I don't believe you fellows can talk upon any other subject but the chances of promotion, or the probability of a Commission of Inquiry."

"Of course not," sneered De Bohun; "it's only literary men who can talk, we all know that."

"Oh, don't let us have a row," said Foote. "I say, Dick, I've left out the dates

in these Conventions. Does it matter?" And he pointed to a bundle of papers by his side.

"Matter! Of course it does. The Chief is awfully particular about the insertion of dates. I remember when first I was appointed leaving out a whole lot, just as you are doing. Well, Salamis sent for me like a shot. 'You have left out these dates,' said he to me, politely; 'pray have them put in at once, and do not let it occur again. Dates, Mr. Pemberton, are the punctuation of history.' Yes, I advise you not to leave them out, unless you wish to be hauled up."

Just then a knock at the greenbaize-door was heard, and in walked a tall, thin, middle-aged man, with an eye-glass in his eye, and an air of affectation both in his manner and talk.

"Ah, good morning, Mr. Pemberton! good morning, gentlemen! At your leisure, Mr. Pemberton, I should be glad if you would step down into my room. I wish to introduce you to Mr. Mowbray—the new appointment, you know. He's coming into

your room, and Lord Salamis desired me to inform you of the fact, so that you could initiate him into his work."

"Who is he?" asked Dick.

"He is the son of a Canon Mowbray, and a personal friend of the Lord President."

"Oh, Mowbray of Baliol—the man who rowed in the Oxford boat!" said Dick.

"Oh, that's all right; I was afraid the new man might be a smug. I know all about him!"

"He's a friend of Mr. Scrope as well."

"I hope he is not a great Pope, like Scrope, though," exclaimed Dick; "these sons of Low Church parsons always turn out such hot Ritualists."

"I do not know," said the gentleman, whose name was Bateman; "it was not my place to inquire into the nature of his religious belief. Then I may expect you shortly in my room?"

"Certainly," said Dick. "I'll just take these papers in to the assistant secretaries, and then be with you."

"Thanks—good morning!" And Mr. Bate-

man, bowing superciliously to Dick and his colleagues, left the room.

"I should like to know what that cursed agitator has to do in this place," said Foote, angrily. "I never take any notice of the fellow. What business has he to come into the Board, and keep out a man like Scrope!"

"I don't mind about his being an agitator," said De Bohun; "I'd be an agitator myself if I thought it would pay! but I do mind his being put over our heads like that. It's an infernal shame: lots of good appointments about, and all of 'em given to outsiders—*pour encourager nous autres*, I suppose!"

"It's one of the charms of living under a system of parliamentary government," said Dick, with a sneer, as he left the room. "If an outsider doesn't get the berth, a favourite does!"

There were some grounds for Dick's sneer. Mr. Bateman was one of the examples which the Civil Service so frequently presents of the *sic vos non vobis* principle—a principle regarded by many

servants of the Crown as a rather depressing grievance. The son of a poor Doctor, Henry Bateman, shortly after he quitted Oxford, where he had taken a first-class, was called to the Bar, but though he read hard, diligently went circuit and sessions, and never lost an opportunity, briefs seldom found their way into his dingy chambers. At the end of a few years he did what many a briefless barrister has done before him, betook himself to that haven for neglected forensic talent—the Press. Attaching himself to the Liberal party, he wrote up every measure they introduced. A bold and vigorous writer, his articles soon attracted attention; not a subject which promoted the welfare of “the masses,” or the freedom of trade, or agricultural prosperity, or the diminution of pauperism, or the softening down the antagonism between Labour and Capital, and the like, but met with the red-hot support of his pen. Full of passion, fiery rhetoric, a little genius, and much curious English, his compositions never fell flat upon the public. The aristocracy laughed

at him, but feared him a little ; the middle classes were inclined to like him, but couldn't quite make him out ; the lower classes, whose steady friend he was, worshipped him. Nor did he confine his labours merely to journalism. He wrote an able book on "Pauperism," an essay on the Land Question, and political pamphlets without number. He was ever mixing his name up with the grievances of the working man, and spouting forth his wrongs wherever his burning eloquence had a chance of being listened to. Not a contested election was ever fought in the country without his presence animating the ranks of the Liberals. Not a trades dispute ever bordered upon a strike without his voice of encouragement or admonition being heard. Not a grave social question was agitated but he gave his opinion upon it. Not a political inquiry was mooted but he praised or condemned it. He was always writing, always speaking, always at blood-heat, always everywhere. No man earned his eight hundred pounds a year more hardly.

At last, on the Coalition Ministry, of which Lord Salamis was almost the only true Conservative Member, taking office, the Liberals felt "they must do something for Bateman." Something was done for him. He was popped into one of the three Keeperships of Protocols of the Board of Conventions at a salary of one thousand two hundred pounds a year. But the junior officials of the Board thought this appointment very hard lines.

"Why," it was asked, "should Mr. Bateman, because he had a fluent pen, a ready tongue, and had done good service to his party, be placed at the top of the tree in the Board? He knew nothing of the working of the office; nothing of its duties; he had never been connected with the department. Why, then, to the exclusion of men like Scrope, who had been for years in the office, who knew every letter that had been written, and every convention that had been entered into, should Mr. Bateman be passed over their heads? Was such a proceeding likely to encourage young men in the performance

of their duties when they saw the prizes of their profession given to a rank outsider? Mr. Bateman was a barrister: reward him in his own profession—make him a county court judge or a commissioner of Bankruptcy, anything but one of the heads of an office to which he had no right.” And then it was indignantly urged, Would any other profession tolerate such a system? How would a barrister like to see a distinguished legal writer, not called to the bar, made a vice-chancellor? how would a bishop like to see an eminent theologian, not a clergyman, made an archbishop? how would a post-captain like to see a great shipwright made an admiral? how would a general like to see a great tactician, who had never held a commission, a field-marshal? and so on. And yet this was the daily practice in the Civil Service! It was scandalous.

Thus Mr. Bateman was not very popular with the officials of the Board. If Lord Salamis could have prevented his appointment he would, but the pressure of party tactics was too strong for him and he was forced to

yield. Scrope, who had been expecting and working for the post, was keenly disappointed, but it was believed in the office that as a salve for his mortification he would get the next vacant assistant secretaryship, the better and more responsible appointment of the two.

Mr. Bateman, ever since he had taken his seat in his new office, had shown the earnestness of his convictions by cutting all his former habits and republican companions and leading a life of lamb-like quiet. "Doth the wild ass bray when it hath grass?" said Lord Salamis, drily, when the political vice-president sarcastically alluded to Mr Bateman's muzzled behaviour.

Pemberton descended the staircase and walked into Mr. Bateman's room. Kit was standing on the hearthrug examining the backs of the journals of the House of Commons.

"Mr. Mowbray, let me introduce you to your future colleague, Mr. Pemberton!"





CHAPTER VI.

AT ROYSTON.

OF all the broad shires in England I know no fairer county than that of Limeshire. For the combination of mountain and moor, wood and water, it stands unrivalled. To the artist with his æsthetic eye, its hilly passes, richly clothed valleys, thickly timbered forests, and picturesque varieties which the landscape is ever unfolding, are as full of charm as are the well-stocked trout streams, and the wide moorland, broken by hill and dale, to the sportsman. Certainly a gem in nature's coronet is Limeshire.

In one of its most lovely spots, watered by the broad stream of the Lime, and within gun-shot of the splendid Trevestal wood, stands Royston Hall, a large white

building with columns and porticoes, on the brow of one of the numerous undulations that surround the neighbourhood. A wide park, severed in twain by a lake fed by the Lime, encircles the house, whilst in the rear is the wood with its tall waving firs and mysteries of shade. Away in the distance the great upland region of Teignmoor can be seen with all its variety of hill and valley, bog and stream, whilst, like Cyclopean castles, the gigantic masses of weathered granite rise at intervals to crown the famous Tors.

Approaching the house, one sees from the statued terraces and well-kept lawn and garden, that the place is carefully looked after. Standing on its steps is a tall gentleman, past middle age, yet wearing his years well and gracefully. The pink of an Englishman to look at. A small, rather haughtily posed head; light curly brown hair, more thickly interspersed with silver than the owner likes to contemplate; a broad open forehead, free from line or furrow; an aquiline nose, which its possessor has a frequent trick of caressing as if

fearing it was a little too beaky ; a short upper lip, most scrupulously shaven ; a largish mouth, full of strong white teeth ; a sharp chin, also closely shaven ; and short but thick brown-gray whiskers, which well fill up a face slightly inclined to be gaunt, complete his vignette. The dress he wears becomes his somewhat antique face—high white collar issuing from a thick blue-and-white neckcloth, of the Brummel pattern ; a double-breasted buff waistcoat, buttoned almost up to the throat ; an open claret-coloured coat, with any amount of pockets ; and tight drab trousers, falling over thick gaitered shoes. In his hand is his hunting cap, and his eyes wander towards the stables to see if the horses are visible which are to take him and his daughter out for their ride on this beautiful April morning.

A lucky man is Mr. Geoffrey Barillon, the Squire of Royston and father of Muriel. Originally the younger son of a younger son he was brought up to expect but little of this world's goods. Accordingly, being fond of agriculture and its pursuits, when his slender fortune fell into

his hands he invested much of its proceeds in a small farm in Norfolk. There he married, and reaped and sowed till one fine morning he found himself, on the death of his eccentric cousin, the late Squire, the owner of Royston—one of the best properties in the county. The direct heir to the estates was Sir George Barillon, then governor of a cluster of islands in the South Pacific, and the only brother of the deceased. But, owing to a quarrel between the two, Sir George was carefully excluded from any benefit in the will, and as Royston was not entailed, he had no alternative but to submit to its conditions. His cousin Geoffrey, however, actuated by the feelings of an honest and high-minded man, was desirous of handing over the estate to the person he considered to be the rightful heir, retaining only some of the personalty in his possession; but he found that from certain provisions in the will, this was impossible. Besides, Sir George did not then feel very keenly the loss of the property; he was very happy in the South Pacific and detested all the conventionalities of civilization. Still,

his cousin, on coming into the estate, insisted on presenting him with a good share of the personalty, and the gift was gracefully accepted.

A fairly popular man in the county is the present Squire. Cared he for politics he could have stood for the shire over and over again, but he detested the subject and declined all enticing offers from agents and voters. He was a Tory of the old school, and cried that the times were out of joint; besides, he was quite content with the ordinary pursuits of a country life, and wanted, he said, no other occupation. His chief hobby was the improvement of Royston, which had been sadly neglected in the time of the late Richard Barillon, or "Mad Dick," as he had been called. And so, what with building, draining, fencing, and making the estate one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most valuable in his part of the world, there was a little malicious gossip in Limeshire to the effect that Squire Barillon had spent rather more than he ought to have done and had bitten his fingers somewhat. From certain mortgages that he had lately

concluded, there was perhaps some reason for the existence of this rumour.

And now the horses have come round, and Muriel, in her dark-grey habit, gauntlet-gloves, and well-shaped London hat (how often women ruin their whole get-up by an ugly headgear!) is as bright and fresh as ever. The clear pale face looks very well beneath the veiled hat, while the habit reveals to perfection the soft undulating lines of her figure. The Squire lifted his daughter into the saddle—a duty which he never allowed butler or groom to perform when he was by—and then mounted himself.

“Well, Muriel, I thought you were never coming!” said he, as they both walked their horses down the avenue to the park gates.

“I am afraid I was a long time, papa, dear; but Thompson brought me the *Dart-vennis Gazette*, and I lost a little time by looking into it.”

“Then I suppose you know the news?”

“What news? The musical festival to be held in the Cathedral?”

"Well, no; not that: it has something to do with the Cathedral though. I just saw it in the *Post*. I suppose it is true," said the Squire.

"What is true?" asked Muriel. "How provoking you are, papa! why don't you tell me at once?"

"Canon Mowbray is to be our new Dean," said the Squire, looking at his daughter keenly.

"Oh, is he? I am so glad!" burst out Muriel, and then she checked herself.

"From all that I have heard of Canon Mowbray, I suppose his appointment here will be considered a very satisfactory one. You like him?"

"Very much."

"But that is not the only reason why you are glad he is coming, eh?"

"What do you mean, papa?" said she, looking down and arranging her habit.

"You know, Muriel, my views as regards your former intimacy with Canon Mowbray's son," said the Squire, looking at his daughter keenly. "I shall not permit any nonsense to take place between you two."

"You do not wish me to avoid him entirely, I suppose?" asked Muriel, tying knots in her horse's mane.

"Avoid is too harsh a word, but I wish you to let him see that the past is to be the past, and that there can be nothing in common between you two for the future. It only requires a little tact."

"I am sure Mr. Mowbray has done nothing to cause you to take such an aversion to him, papa. You met him in London and knew that he was a friend of Arthur's, and yet you did not take any objection to him."

"I do not take any objection to him; you know perfectly well, Muriel, my reasons against any renewal of your former intimacy. Your aunt was most foolish to have encouraged him as she did!"

"But why, papa dear," asked Muriel, meekly, "bring up a conversation which has so long been a tabooed subject between us?"

"Why? Because matters are likely to be different now. When you spoke to me of this Mr. Mowbray and of the *penchant*

you entertained for him and which no doubt, from the little things you have told me, he also entertains for you, I let you plainly know my opinion upon the subject, but I never troubled myself seriously about it. You lived in the country, and Mr. Mowbray lived in town, and the chances were, that unless opportunity offered, the sentimental feeling on both sides would soon die a natural death. But now affairs assume a different aspect. With Canon Mowbray as our new Dean, the young Mr. Mowbray will be frequently down here; and if encouragement be given him, may prove an obstacle to my schemes."

"To what schemes do you allude, papa?" asked the daughter, with a certain touch of dignity in her manner as she put the question.

"My dear Muriel," began her father, gravely, "you are now twenty-two, and I have a very natural wish to see your future happy—that is, well provided for. Now the world looks upon me as rich, and so I am in a certain sense. But Royston is a large property, and costs a great deal to

keep up—indeed, I have spent more money upon it than I ought, or shall ever get back again. Besides, I regret to say that I have lost a great deal lately in speculation. I acted for the best; I knew that the portion I could give you would be, for a girl in your position, small, and I therefore wished to increase it by some commercial enterprises which I thought would turn out well—Gad, I wish now I had taken Mr. Lambert's advice, for he always counselled me against them! Well, these speculations, as I have said, have been a dead failure, and I am not a little harassed. You know the property by the late will is strictly entailed on Arthur, and should he die childless, on you. There was a time when Arthur's health was so delicate that I thought it almost a certainty that you would inherit and be a great heiress. You know how it was when Hawtrey was my steward! But now that he is perfectly recovered and married to that Belgian lady, I hope there need be no fear about his inheritance of the estate. Your portion will of course come out of the property, but it will be a small

one, I tell you, because Royston is already mortgaged pretty considerably. Arthur has been very good about money matters, and the estate will not bear a heavy burden on it. Therefore, my dear child, it is necessary that you marry a rich man." And he looked down upon her kindly.

"Why necessary? Suppose I do not care about wealth, or the conventionalities which are the chief aim of so many girls? Suppose I care more for domesticity than ambition, money would not then be such an important matter in your eyes, would it?" And she looked up at her father with a gentle smile upon her face.

"Ah, my Muriel! youth dreams, but age calculates. I should not be doing my duty towards you if I ever consented to your marrying aught but a rich man. It is just as easy for you to lose your heart on a man who can make handsome settlements as on one who has absolutely nothing—Hullo! here's Andrew Lambert!"

"How do, Lambert?" said the Squire, shaking him cordially by the hand.

"Quite well, thanks. Good morning,

Miss Barillon ; splendid morning for a ride. My mare is so fresh that I can hardly hold her, and I have to go into Dartvennis on business—I hate riding a pulling animal in a town.”

“ Well,” said the Squire, “ here’s a nice bit of common ; let us have a gallop ! Come along, Muriel ! ”

“ Oh, that’ll suit me down to the ground ! ” cried Lambert, wheeling his horse round to Muriel’s side.

And away went the horses as fast as they could gallop for some five minutes. When they pulled up the Squire was some yards ahead.

“ You have heard the news, of course, Miss Barillon ? ” said Lambert.

“ The news—what news ? ” asked Muriel.

“ About our new Dean.”

“ Oh, that Canon Mowbray is to be the Dean ? ”

“ Yes—and do you approve of the choice ? ”

“ Certainly,” replied Muriel, calmly. “ I think all of us at Dartvennis should be charmed with the appointment.”

"Well, the news has made me most miserable," said Lambert.

"Really?" and Muriel looked at the speaker with a little astonishment. "And why, pray?"

"Because there is such a person as Kit Mowbray in the world, and I don't want Dartvennis to be another Riesenheim," rejoined Lambert, somewhat angrily.

"What do you mean, Mr. Lambert?" asked Muriel coldly, and with some hauteur.

Lambert did not explain, but contented himself with muttering very audibly, "Well, there's one comfort; he has an appointment in town, so he'll have to be away from here a good deal!"

"You seem to dislike Mr. Mowbray very much," said Muriel, half smiling, as many women do when they have awakened jealousy.

"I suppose I ought not to say what I think of him to such a friend of his as you are!" answered Lambert, regarding Muriel with a slight frown on his fair face.

"Shall we canter on and rejoin papa?" said Muriel.

"Excuse me, but I must take this turning, as I must go into Dartvennis. Good morning!" And raising his hat somewhat huffily, he started off at a hand gallop down a side road which led from the downs to the town below. Muriel approached her father.

"Why, where is young Lambert?" said the Squire.

"He said he was obliged to go into Dartvennis," replied Muriel.

"Oh, I am sorry for that! a nice young fellow is Lambert—eh?"

No answer.

"He seems very attentive to you, Muriel, and has very much improved of late—quite lost that conceit of manner which was at one time objectionable, and that habit of abusing people. Do you know I fancy I can ascertain the cause of this improvement?" and the Squire looked rather archly at his daughter.

Muriel did not reply, but seemed very busy arranging her habit.

"The fact is," resumed the Squire, "that I believe the young fellow is in love with you!"

"I sincerely hope not!" said Muriel, earnestly.

"And why? Do you know, my dear child, I should have no objection to the match. He will have a considerable fortune——"

"Oh, papa dear," said Muriel, looking up at her father with an air of dignity which was full of sadness, "I wish you would not talk so. Sometimes you make me think that you care for nothing else but money."

"Well, my dear child, it is a very necessary article in the world. The ancients used to call it the root of all evil; but we in this money-making age—when the richest man amongst us is the best—call it the tree of life."

"Well, I do not agree with you, papa dear; and even if I estimated money as highly as you do, Mr. Lambert would not be the man to tempt me, I can assure you."

"I am sorry to hear you say that," said the Squire. "I think Lambert would make you a very good husband."

"*Merci!* I am not so anxious about entering the marriage state."

"Do you know, Muriel, I believe you still think of that young fellow, Mowbray?" said the Squire, with a touch of irritation in his voice.

No answer.

"Is it so, Muriel?"

"What is the use of my thinking of him when you forbid me almost to mention his name, and desire me, now that he's becoming a neighbour, to cut him?"

"I never said cut him."

"No, but it amounts to the same thing," said Muriel, a little pettishly. "After the friendly terms he and I were on at Riesenheim, I must cut him or next door to it. What a heartless coquette he will think me, unless you sanction the renewal of our intimacy."

"I wish you to be friendly with him, but to keep him at a distance. Besides, it is your duty to do so. What is the use of encouraging a young man when you know that nothing can come of it?"

"Do you think, papa," said Muriel, haughtily, "that I shall ever dream of encouraging any one to hope when there

can be no hope? You might have spared me that remark."

"But you encouraged him at Riesenheim?"

"I don't know about encouraging," replied Muriel; "I was very glad to see him, and I am sure he was very glad to see me. I regarded it simply as a pleasant acquaintanceship."

"What a nuisance it is his coming here!" said the Squire, testily. "If it weren't for the appointment of his father you might have forgotten all about him."

"And perhaps he has forgotten all about me by this time; why, it is six months since we met!" said Muriel, with assumed gaiety.

"But suppose you find he has not forgotten you?"

"Then it shall be as you wish; he is to be a stranger to me. And now pray let us change the conversation."

But it was not a pleasant ride.

Miss Lysaght was then staying at Royston, and the Squire after his ride found her in the morning-room awaiting their return.

When he was alone with her he spoke about the new Dean. .

“You see what an indiscreet thing you did, Maria, in encouraging that young Mowbray to come to your villa and hang about Muriel. I thought you had more sense! The girl is attached to him, I verily believe, and now he is coming here—the very place where I thought she was the safest from him! What stupidity women will commit at times! It is inconceivable!”

“Really, Mr. Barillon,” said Miss Ly-saght, rubbing her hands nervously, and with a touch of temper in the movement, “I do not see that I am to blame at all in the matter. We made the acquaintance of Mr. Mowbray in London; he was a guest at your own house more than once; being the son of Canon Mowbray, whom we knew, we thought it only right to show him attention; and as he seemed a very nice young man, it was always a pleasure for us to receive him. If he chose to fall in love with Muriel, he only showed his taste. I am sorry, however, that you disapprove.”

“I do disapprove,” said Mr. Barillon, brusquely. “I know almost nothing of this Mr. Mowbray. Of course you were at liberty to show him attention; but attention that simply means the commonest hospitality is one thing, and attention that encourages a warm intimacy is quite another. The latter is what, it seems to me, you showed to Mr. Mowbray. I repeat again, I will have nothing whatever to say in favour of this ridiculous fancy of Muriel’s. No one detests the fashion of the present day more than I, but we must often, in spite of ourselves, conform to a certain extent to the spirit of the times. Nowadays money is everything: the man with money, no matter how low his birth or how imperfect his education, can become anything, do anything, and enter everywhere. What blood was in my young days money is now; and though I execrate the change and all that follows in its wake, I shall act up to the principle it teaches. My daughter shall marry no one but a man of fortune. It will be her duty to marry a rich man, for I can give her but a small portion.”

"But Muriel is a kind of girl who could live on very much less than many others in her position of life. She has no extravagant tastes, and Mr. Mowbray—supposing that he still thinks of her—is sure to make his way in the world."

"Nonsense! I tell you," said Mr. Barillon, angrily, "that I will not have Mr. Mowbray's name mentioned again in connexion with Muriel. Muriel marries money!"

"But you, Geoffrey" (she seldom called him by his Christian name), "when you married my poor sister, who was penniless, you had very little, and yet you were very happy; happier then in your little Norfolk home than you have been, I verily believe, at Royston. Why then make money such a necessity in Muriel's case?"

"Because in my time wealth was not what it is now. In those days, when a gentleman was content with the simple tastes and habits of his ancestors, domestic life was very different. Now what do we see? — luxury, ostentation, extravagance everywhere; and I don't choose that my daughter should be forced to lead a life

different from the world around her, as she would have to do if she married a pauper."

"But how inconsistent you are! You disapprove of the fashion of the present day with one breath and with the other you wish Muriel to adopt it, to live in it, and be of it. Such inconsistency I never heard of, and certainly never expected to hear from you!"

"It may appear inconsistent to you, but it does not to me. If I, who hate the manners of the present day, were to imitate them, that would be inconsistent. I am of the past generation, and have the views of my time. Muriel is of the present generation, and when I, as her father, act for her, I must be illumined by the light of the present, and not of the past. When I act for myself, purely personally, I have nothing whatever to do with the present; but Muriel's marriage concerns her, not me; I must therefore be guided by the tone of the present day, and the tone of the present day is wealth."

"You have certainly changed your views

very much during the last few years," said Miss Lysaght, sadly. "Excuse me for saying so, but I do not think your sudden acquisition of fortune has improved you. I liked you better as the simple farmer at the Grange."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said the Squire, rising and quitting the room brusquely.

A few words to explain the father's conversation with his daughter. Muriel on her return from Germany had spoken to her father not unfrequently of Kit and how both she and her aunt had appreciated the renewal of his acquaintance. The young girl when alone used often to brood over Riesenheim associations with something of a sentimental interest, and to wonder whether they were still remembered by Mr. Mowbray. More often than she cared to acknowledge to herself she thought of Kit, of what he was doing, whether he had perfectly recovered from his accident, and when they should meet again. It was at this time that she sent him that water-colour sketch of Royston done by herself, which created such happiness in the breast of the

enamoured student at Riesenheim. Absence but makes the heart grow fonder, and Muriel confessed to herself that she never thought she should have missed the society of Kit so much as she had done. It was bad enough not to have seen him when he was laid up ill in Germany, but then they were both in the same town and she could hear of him occasionally ; whereas now he was away from her and the only bond of union between them—her brother—had married, and was wintering in Egypt. It almost made a blank in her existence.

She used to take her aunt into her confidence whenever that excellent lady quitted her little cottage in the north of Limeshire to pay a visit to the Squire. But Miss Lysaght, like most sentimental women, who act first from impulse and then draw back from timidity, and knowing what kind of man the Squire was, became now rather fearful of the consequences that might ensue from her having encouraged any intimacy between Kit and her niece. She consequently advised Muriel to follow the proverb, “ out of sight out of mind,” rather



than the one which says, "absence makes the heart grow fonder," and told her that it was idle thinking of Kit, as her father would never sanction anything of the kind. Still, whenever the matter was discussed, as it had been latterly, between her and the Squire, she stood up for my hero.

"But, aunty, you seemed so to approve of Mr. Mowbray, and to like him?" said Muriel, rather indignantly.

"And so I did, my dear; he is a very nice young man, and was most attentive to us. His society, I believe, did me more good than the waters. But now I don't think it was quite prudent my encouraging him as I did. Many things look so differently here to what they did at Riesenheim. Your father would strongly disapprove of your losing your heart upon this Mr. Mowbray!"

And the Squire did strongly disapprove. At first, when Muriel returned from Germany, and was full of her acquaintance with Kit, her father used to treat the matter as a joke and to ridicule the idea of any serious consequences ever ensuing from a friendship

between his daughter and the penniless son of a London clergyman. It was so absurd, that when in the humour he would banter Muriel about young Mowbray, and say that, "he must be asked down to Royston as soon as he returned from Riesenheim." But when as weeks passed on he found his daughter silent and reflective, and that the impression made by my hero was deeper than he expected, he regarded the matter a little more seriously. He catechized Muriel and cross-examined his sister-in-law, and found, that if Kit Mowbray had not gained possession of his daughter's affections, it wanted but a very little more opportunity and encouragement for him to be in that position. Besides, young Lambert for purposes of his own had spoken to the Squire of the sudden friendship that had sprung up between Muriel and the Canon's son, and had greatly exaggerated matters. Mr. Barillon, who though kindly and sociable could be very stern when he chose, resolved to crush this sentimental feeling in the bud. He spoke gravely to his daughter upon the subject more than once, and desired her not

to bestow another thought upon Mr. Mowbray. "Nothing can come of it," said he, "for I shall debar both of you from meeting again. I see that it is more serious than I had imagined. I shall not invite Mr. Mowbray down here, and should we go up to town next season, you are not to renew your acquaintance with the Canon's family. You must forget him, as he, no doubt, by this time has entirely forgotten you."

But Muriel knew that Kit had not entirely forgotten her. Shortly after she saw his name appointed to the Board of Conventions she received a book about which she had frequently spoken when at Riesenheim. She knew that Kit had sent it, though there was no name written on the book and it came anonymously, from certain passages that she had said she admired being marked in pencil, and love constructions (that she had never dreamed of when alluding to the passages) deduced from them. She had not written to thank him, but had asked her father to invite him at Christmas when the house was pretty full of men who had come down for the hunting. But this request was made just at the time when the

Squire was beginning to view the friendship in a more wintry aspect, and he declined to accede to her wishes. Shortly afterwards arose the lectures à propos de Kit, and the subject was never again introduced between father and daughter. Still, the Squire felt sure that Muriel had not forgotten Kit, and he was beginning seriously to think of not taking her up to town, so as to avoid all chance of her meeting her enamoured swain, when he heard the news of Canon Mowbray's appointment to the Deanery of Dartvennis. The very man whom he had planned never to cross his path was to live in' his immediate neighbourhood, and, no doubt, be an ornament to the place! He could have avoided this Mr. Mowbray in London without difficulty, but to avoid him at Dartvennis without rudeness was almost an impossibility. It was very annoying.

Still the Squire determined to let his daughter see that he had not changed one iota in his views about her acquaintanceship with young Mowbray, and thus arose the conversation I have recorded. For the expression of these views the Squire had

in his own mind very good grounds. As a father he acted up to his lights, and deemed that the course he was pursuing was the one most advantageous to his daughter's interests.

Gossip had been right when it talked of his expensive tastes, and suggested that a little more economy might be advisable. The manner in which Royston was kept up was the very study of perfection. It would be impossible to offer a hint which could improve its appointments. The stables could not have been better built, better ventilated, or better fitted up with all the latest improvements had they belonged to the most enthusiastic of racing peers. The grounds were laid out in such a purely artistic fashion as to have, it was said, elicited the admiration of the great Sir Joseph himself. The low long line of hothouses contained the choicest fruits and rarest flowers, which invariably gained the first prizes at agricultural shows. A mile from the Hall was a model farm, which annually cost a small fortune and never gave any returns worth mentioning. Then the Squire, genial and sympathetic, as are all sociable

men, had given to the town lying outside his park gates a new wing to the hospital, had rebuilt the almshouses, and had almost at his own expense restored the moss-grown tumble-down little parish church. Now all this involved considerable writing of cheques, which caused the Squire's legal adviser to look a little grave and a certain raising of rent, which caused the Squire's tenants to look considerably grave.

But in addition to this Mr. Barillon had been bitten by railways and other sundry speculations suggested to him by the Lord Lieutenant of his county—a wealthy earl who went periodically mad about mines, wonderful inventions, and small railways which must be absorbed by the greater lines, so that his name was somewhat of a byword in the City, and generally figured in almost every company that the Master of the Rolls had to wind up. Thus it came to pass that the Squire was not the rich man appearances gave him credit for, and more than once he had written to his son about the advisability of parting with certain outlying lands and certain stalwart oaks.

Of late years an intimacy had sprung up between the Squire and Mr. Lambert, the father of our young friend at Riesenheim, who owned a large property adjoining Royston. The introduction of Mr. Lambert into the Squirearchy had not been of long standing. Indeed there were people about Dartvennis who knew (and who you may be sure took care to circulate this information) that his father had been but a cloth-worker in the chief manufactory of the place, and that his mother had sold knitted goods in the market on a Saturday. But thanks to this free country where energy always finds a field and hard work never ceases to tell, the humble cloth-worker, by industry and ability, gradually ascended the ladder of prosperity, and from being a "hand," he became a manager, and then a partner in the firm. When he shuffled off this mortal coil he was the head of the business and left a son to carry on the work, and inherit a splendid fortune. This son was a true child of the father, and followed diligently in the paternal steps. He worked as-

siduously at the manufacture of broadcloth, married a lady from Manchester with a large fortune, begat children, bought land wherever it was to be sold in the county, built a splendid mansion, all windows and chimneys, and was looked upon as one of the wealthiest men in the shire. When he talked of the landed gentry he smiled condescendingly, thrust his hands deep down into his trousers pockets, shrugged his shoulders, and felt as a man feels who "could buy 'em all up." It was after the auction of his splendid mansion close to Royston that he had been put into the commission, and thus an acquaintance sprung up between him and the Squire, who was the chairman.

Though Mr. Lambert "could buy 'em all up," he had a sneaking regard for the gentry around—a regard heightened by the aspirations of his wife, who was as ambitious as only a middle-class woman can be. And no one our *nouveau riche* appreciated more than Mr. Barillon; accordingly he began assiduously to cultivate the Squire's friendship and esteem. He gave him sound

business advice, put him up to one or two really good investments, cordially supported him on the Bench and in all local matters, sold him a splendid hunter for a mere song, exchanged rare cuttings of fruits and plants, and in fact made himself generally both agreeable and useful to the county magistrate. Nor did the Squire disregard these little attentions, and it was not long before the Houses of Barillon and Lambert, from being neighbourly became friendly. When Mr. Lambert stood successfully for Dartvennis and became a prominent Liberal M.P., the other families in the county followed the example of the Squire.

It was the one fond object of Mrs. Lambert's ambition to see her only son Andrew married to Muriel. She was enchanted when she saw the two young people together at the different Limeshire meetings, and apparently not averse to each other's society. And yet Muriel did not care for young Lambert in the least, but only showed him such attention as the exigences of common politeness demanded. Nor was

the young man at that time very impassioned. Muriel was a pretty girl, and it gratified his vanity to be seen paying her attention—that was all. It was not till his return from Riesenheim that he began seriously to think the Squire's daughter worth the winning; and acted upon by the advice of his mother, he soon put the thought into action. He played his cards so as to meet her frequently in the society of the neighbourhood: he managed to cross her path when she went out riding or driving; he tried to worm himself into her good graces by subscribing very handsomely to the little charities she advocated; he obeyed every little wish she expressed like a command, and in fact was quite the devoted knight. And yet he was not really devoted. Cold, calculating, and egotistic, his attentions to Muriel had no true ring of the heart about them—they were not love, but business. His egotism bade him marry a beauty, and his pride bade him "marry well;" he felt that no woman he knew better satisfied these two promptings than

Muriel. Accordingly he resolved to enter the lists and secure her hand. A marked improvement became visible in his outward character. He dropped his affected cynicism and his habit of abusing people. He toned down his natural conceit, and because he aimed at being less of the fine gentleman became more of the real one. He assumed a less pretentious style in his dress; discarded much of his jewellery; ceased to adopt a kind of cavalry swagger in his gait, and in short transformed himself into quite a presentable person.

One fine day Mr. Lambert had said, "Well, Squire, I think my boy is getting a little hard hit by the charms of your fair daughter."

"Is he?" asked the Squire innocently, though perfectly conscious of the fact, and on the whole not displeased with it.

"Yes, that he is, I'm sure!" rejoined Mr. Lambert. "You have no objection, have you? The girl that marries my boy will be the mistress of as good a fortune as any young woman need wish to have. If matters come to the point, there will

be no hitch about the question of settlements, Squire, I can tell you that!" And then the Squire ruminating hastily over certain facts—that he was not so rich as he once was, that the portion he could give Muriel must be comparatively a small one, that it was very desirable that she should marry a man of money, that the Lamberts were a very respectable family (how Andrew would have chafed at that word *respectable*!), and that in these plutocratic days it didn't do to be very proud—said he saw no objection.

Thus it came to pass that the Squire did his best quietly to encourage young Lambert, and to uphold him before Muriel. Aware that Kit Mowbray was somewhat of a formidable rival, it is no wonder that he did not relish the idea of our friend the Canon's father taking up his quarters at the Deanery.





CHAPTER VII.

THE MEETING.

THE rumour of Canon Mowbray's appointment to the Deanery of Dartvennis was perfectly correct. The Government had of late been accused of excessive partiality towards the High Church party. Every see that fell vacant had been immediately occupied by some distinguished divine of the extremest Anglican principles. Not a canonry or prebend, but was bestowed on sympathizers with the revival of Ritualism. The livings in the gift of the Crown were one after the other filled with men who were regarded as opponents of the Low Church school. On all special occasions it was the fashion to ignore Evangelicism pure and simple. The Sunday-afternoon preachers at the Chapel Royal,

the Sunday-evening preachers at St. Paul's, were always High Church men. All the late appointments of chaplains in ordinary had been High Church men. Whenever an ecclesiastical committee sat for the revision of anything, its members were sure to be High Church men. Every vacant colonial bishopric was offered to one High Church man after the other, and it was only when the see was unusually unhealthy and had been rejected by every second-rate Anglo-Catholic divine that it was thought time to offer it to some eminent Evangelical. The High Church was basking in the sunshine of favour; the Low Church was shivering in the cold shade of neglect. Accordingly the English Church Union was as triumphant and aggressive as the Church Association was sulky and discouraged.

But Parliamentary Government, as Lord Salamis told Kit, is essentially party government, and so the Low Church worked its members in the House, flooded the country with tracts accusing the Prime Minister of Popery, thundered forth daily and weekly

denunciations in the press, stormed on platforms, prayed at meetings, preached in churches, and made its influence felt at every contested election in order to defeat the Government.

Accordingly it was thought unwise to resist this cumulative antagonism, especially as the Low Church was threatening a political alliance with the Dissenters. An element too of strong personality against the Premier had also been introduced into this hostility which it was reckless to encourage. It was said that the head of the Government was a secret ally of the Pope, that he was in league with the Jesuits, who boasted the speedy conversion of England, that he himself had become a Jesuit and was the most subtle of the Order, that he never passed any political measure without first consulting a certain famous Monsignor, that he could be seen confessing three times a week at Farm Street, that he wore a little crucifix beneath his waistcoat, that he wore a hair shirt beneath his linen one, that he slept on sackcloth and ashes, and was nightly

scourged by his valet, who was a Capuchin in disguise, that he had received a blessed relique from the Supreme Pontiff—and the like.

Such erroneous impressions it was deemed politic to do away with. Accordingly a spirit of less partiality was introduced into the question of ecclesiastical preferment. An important see that had fallen vacant was offered to a celebrated Evangelical divine in the North, and accepted. Two secretaries of certain Low Church societies had been appointed Inspectors of Schools. The Premier took the chair at a Protestant demonstration at Exeter Hall, and on two occasions gave away the prizes at certain youths' institutes. A hard working Low Churchman at the east end of London was made a colonial bishop; an eminent Low Church writer and Cambridge professor was offered a canonry; three well known authors of tracts received Crown livings; and the last act of the penitent Government was to offer Canon Mowbray the Deanery of Dartvennis.

It was not without much thought and deliberation that the Canon exchanged St.

Winifrid's for Dartvennis. Had he been a few years younger he would have refused the preferment, but latterly his severe parochial work had begun to tell upon him. His medical man looked grave, said something about the heart and recommended change of air and quiet. Mrs. Mowbray too was anxious about him, and wished him to go abroad for a year. Many members of his congregation bade him rest and leave more of the work to the curates. But his sensitive conscience forced him on to continue his efforts and never to quit hold of the plough whilst strength remained to plod behind in the riven furrows and prepare the land for the seed.

At last, one evening as he was about to issue forth to ascend the pulpit, he swooned in the vestry. Care was now not a matter of inclination but a duty, and he contented himself with less of the work to which he was accustomed. He supervised whilst others acted, and his health rapidly mended. It was now that the Deanery was offered him. Should he accept it? He felt

disinclined at his time of life to quit scenes and memories so redolent of happy associations for a new and strange sphere of labour. He was getting stronger, too, and fancied that he would soon be fit for hard work again in his parish. He was loth to quit London, and hesitated. His brother was most indignant at this hesitation.

“Why should you deliberate one moment about accepting?” he asked. “What clear gain do you make in taking the Deanery?”

“About eleven hundred a year. You see I shall have to give up the Canonry.”

“Well, are you the man to afford to throw up some eleven hundred a year?”

“But that is not the only way to look at the question,” began the Canon, mildly. “Money and ambition are all very well in their way, but in our sacred calling——”

“Ah, but it *is* the way to look at it,” broke in the Colonel; “if a man serves the Church well, he expects and deserves to get preferment. *Nolo episcopari* deceives no

one but the vulgar, who are only made to be deceived. What I like in the Church," said he, sarcastically, "is, that it permits the same ends as the other professions, whilst it masks the motives. Do you mean to say that if there were no bishoprics and ecclesiastical prizes to aim after, a single man would enter the Church? Of course not. It is all very well for you to say that the Church is a mission, and not a profession. But do you mean to say that every curate does not hope to be, and is not animated by the secret ambition of one day being Right Reverend, or Very Reverend, or the like, just as every barrister hopes to be on the Bench? But the difference between the two is this, that the successful barrister openly accepts the prize, and is glad to get it; whilst the successful priest, who is not a whit the less ambitious man, thinks it incumbent upon himself and his Christian profession to pretend he doesn't want it, and all that kind of thing, though perhaps he has been moving Heaven and earth to get the post. Why, there is the Bishop of Kilburn—well, it is a noto-

rious fact, that when he was Archdeacon of Hampstead, the very moment he heard that his predecessor in his present see was *in extremis*—before the very breath had quitted his episcopal body—he was working all his influence with the Premier to succeed him; and then when the post was offered him, pretended that he didn't want it, and that it was forced upon him. We men of the world call that kind of thing by a very strong name——”

“But I can assure you my hesitation does not proceed from any such false motives,” began the Canon, smiling.

“Ah, but people will put all kinds of constructions upon it should you refuse; that Dartvennis is not good enough; that you are expecting to be bishop, and all the rest of it. And why should you refuse? Good God!——”

“Now, William, I must ask you not to use language of that kind. I cannot——”

“I beg your pardon. My indignation got the better of me. But what I was saying was this: Why should you not be

as ambitious as your fellows? There is ambition in the Church, you know," said the old man, cynically, "though, as I have said, the motives are always veiled. When a man quits his living for a better one, he says he is going to a 'more useful sphere of labour,' but everybody knows he is going because he gains so many extra hundreds a year. And the same with the man who is appointed to a bishopric; it is *nolo episcopari* and the like, whereas if you passed him over he would be ready to turn Dissenter. They talk about the days of the Established Church being numbered. Nonsense! an institution that revolves on the axis of hypocrisy, and between the poles of simony and self-interest, is too well suited to human nature ever to be abolished."

"You are very complimentary to my profession, William," said the Canon with dignity.

"Well, but you irritate me, Herbert. Here you are, a man with two daughters on your hands, and a by no means over-large income, and yet you pretend to hesitate about accepting this Deanery! It is ri-

diculous ! Why do you hesitate ? Because you want a better offer, or because you wish by a mock delay to be pressed to accept it ?”

“ I am afraid you would not understand my motives if I told you, William ; you, who think that no man can act disinterestedly. I am simply loth to quit the homes and haunts around me which I know and love so well, and where I am sure I have been permitted to be useful, for a new sphere of life, and the society of perfect strangers. It is a very natural feeling, and has nothing mercenary or mock-modest about it. Besides, I am not so young as I once was, and the responsibility of this new position——”

“ Not so young as you once were ! Who is ? But you are the age when men in other walks of life become judges, great generals, or great engineers. Nonsense, write to the Government by return of post that you accept the Deanery, preach a farewell sermon to your congregation, and tell them like a man that you have accepted this preferment because it will give you a better

balance at your bankers, and go into the City and double your life insurance. There! Dixi."

But the Canon did not pay much attention to his brother's remarks. If anything he would have liked to refuse the Deanery, simply to show the Colonel that a man could be a priest, and yet neither mercenary nor ambitious. But the subject became a grave topic of domestic conversation, and the opinion of the household was taken upon it. The verdict was in favour of Dartvennis. After a week's pondering the offer was accepted. Mrs. Mowbray thought with the Colonel, that the additional income arising from the Deanery would be very acceptable. Kit was all for the exchange, as it would bring him near to Muriel; whilst Rosa and Georgie certainly showed no signs of objection. The medical man, too, strongly recommended the climate of Dartvennis, and said the south coast was precisely the place for the Canon in his present state. And so this united expression of opinion ultimately decided the Rector of St. Winifrid's, and his home was henceforth to be Limeshire.

"And I shouldn't wonder if you were to become a bishop," said the Colonel, gleefully. "Our family wants a bishop. Since the Duke of Newcastle appointed Lancelot Mowbray, in 1745, to Hereford, we Mowbrays have never yet given a bishop to the Bench."

And so the matter ended.

"I suppose you are going down to see your father installed next Thursday?" asked Charley Foote of Mowbray as one morning, shortly after the Canon's appointment was made known, they were entering the long corridor of the Board together.

"No, I am sorry to say I can't get away just yet. Bateman wants me to finish all about this Amour River question before it comes on in the House, and to take no leave till it is done. It's an awful bore, but I shall get away as soon as possible!"

"I'm sorry for that, as I was in hopes we might travel down together," said Foote.

"Why, are you going to Dartvennis?"

"Yes; the Bishop's wife is my first cousin, and has asked me to spend my Easter at the Palace. All your people gone down yet?"

"Yes; went the day before yesterday! What kind of place is this Dartvennis?"

"Oh, the usual kind of cathedral town—one-half ecclesiastical, and the other half military, commercial, and musical. Lots of nice people in the neighbourhood, though."

"By the way," asked Kit, carelessly, "do you know anything of the Barillons of Royston?"

"Of course I do! Barillon is the county magnate about there, and his daughter is the belle of the place. I hear that a fellow called Lambert is to be the lucky man. Bye-bye, I'm going to see the secretary." And so saying Foote opened a dark mahogany door at the end of the corridor, and was lost to sight.

Kit paid little attention to Foote's remark about Lambert, deeming it a very possible bit of gossip to get afloat in the country, where a young man can't

ask a young lady to pass the salt without being put down for serious intentions. Besides, he knew Muriel too well to think that Andrew Lambert was to be his successful rival. He remembered how she almost laughed at him, and accordingly he dismissed Foote's observation with the contempt he thought it deserved. It served him, however, as a reason for again thinking of Muriel.

Though months had now passed since the happy days of Riesenheim, he still treasured up every association connected with the fair niece of Miss Lysaght. He had expected to have been asked down to Royston as Muriel had promised, and was very disappointed that no such invitation had come, but still he thought there must be some very good reason for the omission, and did not, therefore, augur evil from it.

As the winter began to dissolve its icy hold on Nature for the genial touch of early spring, he looked forward to the time when she would come up to town with her father for the season. Would

she then have forgotten all about him? Would she care to renew acquaintance with him? When they met again would she be the same to him in London as she had been at Riesenheim? These were important questions.

Shortly after obtaining his appointment he had resumed his work at Stangate. The idea of Arthur Barillon had now turned out quite a success, and there was no lack of young men from the clubs who were anxious to interest themselves in the work of philanthropy. Indeed, it was rather a fashionable thing to do than otherwise. For a brief time Barillon had come up to town to superintend the labours of his mission, but his return to Stangate was only temporary, for he had just married, and was on the point of going to Egypt for the winter. He greeted Kit very cordially, but there was something in his tone which had not its old kindly ring, and the manner in which he put off all mention of Muriel, and questions relating to her, was cold and constrained. Kit consequently felt

rebuffed and a little hurt, and when the two young men parted for the winter they each bade good-bye as if their farewell was a relief. Perhaps Arthur Barilston had heard from the Squire that Kit was paying attention to his sister, and had been told to be cold and guarded in his manner in all things touching Muriel. Perhaps the young man did not himself approve of Kit as a fitting suitor. Whatever may have been the cause he was certainly different. Thus the only link between Kit and Muriel had been severed, and the young man was at a loss whence to derive any knowledge about her movements or anything regarding her. It was so long since he had last seen her that she seemed more like a memory than a reality; but still a memory he loved to think about, and which helped somehow or other to sweeten the current of his life.

And now his father was to be Dean of Dartvennis! Henceforth his home was to be within a few miles of Royston. No wonder, then, that he fully approved

of the preferment that had been offered the Canon, and was strong in favour of its unhesitating acceptance. The Fâtes were indeed propitious to his suit. Nothing could have been better arranged even had he had the ordering of matters. What he had longed for, prayed for, was opportunity to renew and improve his acquaintance with Muriel, and now he fully expected such opportunity would be granted him. His heart beat high, and imagination painted the future in glowing colours.

Up till now he had kept his passion a secret, which he permitted no one to share. It is true his family had guessed some little of it; still it was only guess work, for he had told them nothing. But as circumstances had fallen out he thought it advisable to be no longer entirely reserved upon the subject. He took his eldest sister, Rosa—a discreet and sensible maiden—into his confidence, and bade her be a clever *diplomatiste* in the conduct of his affairs. How invaluable in these little matters is the medium

of a wise and tentative sister! She can become intimate with the beloved object; she can extract little confidences, which she can repay by little statements which the man himself cannot make; she can with well feigned innocence arrange suitable little interviews; she can watch and fathom and criticise, and tell to the beat of a heart whether the gentle maiden returns the passion, dissimulates the passion, or is free from it altogether. Invaluable relationship! Kit did well to make his sister his *confidante*, and with a kiss and an intelligent smile the inestimable Rosa promised to be his true friend in the matter.

Unfortunately, as Kit told Foote, official matters had kept him in town and prevented him from running down to Dartvennis as early as he would have liked, but still the Sunday after the Dean had preached his first sermon found my hero an inmate of the Deanery.

The large red bricked house with its long narrow windows and Anne-like architecture, was pretty full of guests. The list comprised the Colonel and his eldest

daughter on a visit for a fortnight ; the Hon. Mr. Granes Masham, the well-known Evangelical brewer, whose name appeared on the committee list of every society organized by his party ; the Rev. Fakir Jones, the celebrated North American Missionary, whose hairbreadth escapes from grizzly bears, and grizzled Red Indians, formed a not uninteresting feature in the *Monthly Intelligencer* of the society to which he belonged ; the Lady Mary Seed, who was indefatigable about Convalescent Hospitals ; Mdme. De Perdu, who was indefatigable about Refuges and Midnight Meetings ; Miss Louisa Grey, who was indefatigable about emigration ; Lord Ficklethorpe, who was always establishing new societies for new objects and winding them up again ; Col. Tudor, whose *bête noire* was Roman Catholicism, and who went about the country lecturing with diagrams of the most excruciating instruments that were, he said, used in convents ; and one or two other people with whom we have nothing to do.

“ Your father,” said the Colonel to his

nephew as they crossed the Close to enter the western door of the cathedral, always had the trick of getting together the oddest collection of people imaginable—where he picks them up I cannot imagine, for no one ever meets them anywhere. Ah! that's a well appointed carriage drawing up, Kit—no country builder had a hand in its make and shape I'll vow! Why, it's Barillon! and there's his daughter—a very pretty girl, they tell me. Come along, and I'll introduce you—they left cards at the Deanery a few days ago!"

Kit had scarcely time to tell his uncle that Mr. and Miss Barillon were not entire strangers to him when he found himself face to face with Muriel and her father. The Colonel advanced, grinned and greeted the Squire, bowed with the obsequious politeness of the Regency to Muriel, and introduced his nephew. Mr. Barillon shook hands cordially with Kit, and was good enough to say that he remembered meeting him in town and was delighted at having his father for so near a neighbour. Muriel's clear pale face looked a little

paler than usual, and there was just the slightest tremor in the little gloved hand she extended to her admirer. The Colonel and the Squire were slightly in front expatiating upon the carved work surrounding the Gothic arch of the western door, and Kit seized the opportunity to launch forth a few hasty passes of conversation.

"I'm awfully glad to see you again! What an age it seems since we last met!" said Kit.

"Yes, it is some time," replied Muriel, coldly. "I hope you have recovered from your accident; if I remember we left you when you were still far from convalescent."

"Accident? Oh, the Hawtrey affair! oh yes, thanks, perfectly. I wonder how he is by the way? I wrote to the Doctor—the Professor you know—but in his reply he never mentioned anything about him."

"He is still very ill, I believe—at least some weeks ago papa communicated with Dr. Stützmächer about him, and we heard that he was not yet out of that dreadful asylum."

"Very sad. Is Miss Lysaght with you?—how kind she was to me at Riesenheim. I never can forget her! what delicious days those were!" he said, softly.

"No; Miss Lysaght left us a week ago. Are you making any long stay here?" she asked, listlessly.

"No, a very short one I am sorry to say can't get much leave at present!" replied Kit.

"Oh, I forgot! I have to congratulate you on successfully passing your examination."

"Thanks to your tuition—the Examiner gave me that very piece from Marie Stuart we used to spout together—don't you remember, '*Gastfreundlich hätte England sie empfangen. &c. ?*'"

"Did we?" replied Muriel, very passively.

"Papa and Colonel Mowbray seem very much engaged in studying architecture. It is a beautiful cathedral, is it not?"

"Oh yes, magnificent! They tell me there is another very fine specimen of architecture not very far from here called Royston." And the young man laughed.

"We are going to make a formal call on you next week, so I shall have the opportunity of comparing the actual building with that pretty sketch you sent me. How I treasure up that sketch!" he said, in a low earnest voice.

"It was very foolish of me to send it, I fear," said Muriel, a slight flush mounting to her cheeks.

"Foolish! why foolish?"

Before she could vouchsafe a reply the Squire had turned round to look after his daughter, saying—

"Well, Muriel, I think it is time we entered now. I have just been showing your uncle," added he, addressing Kit, "the fretwork over the doorway, it is thought very fine."

Just then a young man touched Mr. Barillon's shoulder.

"I say, Squire, could you let me have a seat in your stall—ours is quite full; such lots of people want to hear the new Dean—Good morning, Miss Barillon! Hallo! Mowbray, how do? When did you come down? Glad to renew my acquaintance

with you." And Lambert, for it was he, shook hands with Kit, but not so cordially as one would have anticipated from his words. However, he was very civil; for Andrew Lambert, now that he had had some practical experience of life, belonged to that school of mankind which, believing that something is to be got out of everybody, never makes an enemy openly. After a few words the newly met separated—the Squire, Muriel, and Lambert going one way, and the Colonel and his nephew going the other.

I fear that Kit paid but scant attention that morning to the services of the Church or listened with his wonted admiration to the words that fell from his father's lips. 'Tis true the young man's thoughts were none of the happiest. Mariners, whose lot is cast in Arctic seas, tell us that as they near an iceberg they feel a chill which has a peculiarly depressing sensation. Such a kind of chill Kit now experienced. He had greeted Muriel with the confidence and cordiality of an old friend—he was met with the cold advances and unsympathizing interest of the merest acquaintanceship. The

sunny geniality of her manner, which had been to him so full of charm, had given place to an air of reserve and icy passiveness particularly wounding to Kit's *amour propre*. Brief as was the conversation that passed between them it sufficed to show him that Muriel was no longer the same whom he had known at Riesenheim. She had uttered no happy allusion to the past, she had given no look or smile as of old, she left him nothing for memory to cling to with hope in the silent hours of absence. Yes, it was a bitter truth to accept. She was changed. But why? He knew not.

He saw her no more that day. He had hoped to have met her again on the steps outside the Cathedral, and to see whether he was not labouring under delusion about her, but as he opened the red-baize door to let his mother and sisters pass out he caught a glimpse of the low claret-coloured landau of Mr. Barillon driving rapidly down the Close with Lambert on its back seat placidly sucking his walking-stick. As it passed him Kit took off his hat; his bow was returned by Muriel with cold gravity.

As he walked by the Colonel's side back to the Deanery for that comfortless meal, an early cold Sunday's dinner, he was full of mortifying reflections. Could there be any truth in Foote's passing remark about Lambert? The thing was impossible!

"She may not care for me *now*," he thought to himself, "but she is a very different girl to what I imagine her to be if she could ever care for Lambert."

"Well, my nephew, you look very cheerful," said the Colonel, grinning, "one would think you had had your cold dinner. By the way, why are the clergy so often out of sorts on a Monday? It must be owing to that wretched meal of the day before, because, for a body of men the Church is as fond of the fruits of good living—look at the Bishop of St. Ventre, *par exemple*!—as its neighbours. No—no, not your poor father, he was never much of an Amphitryon. What a cook he has! Where did your mother get her from? From one of the prison establishments, I should think, from her utter ignorance of everything

that isn't directly roasted or boiled. But why are you so grave, Kit?"

"Oh, I was only thinking."

"Well, then don't do it, my dear boy. You are evidently unaccustomed to it. By the way, do you know the Barillons?"

Kit replied in the affirmative, and carelessly alluded to having met Miss Barillon at Riesenheim.

"Hum!" said the Colonel, reflectively. "She's a charming girl—a very charming girl—but," said he sharply, and eying his nephew, "not for you, my dear Kit!"

"How do you mean 'not for me,' Uncle William?" asked the nephew, somewhat testily.

"What I say, my boy—what I say. Do you think I cannot see, with half a glance, that you are *épris* with that young lady? But, Kit, you will sigh in vain, and therefore I think it better that you should know the truth at once, and not sigh at all!"

"What do you mean by the truth?"

"This," replied the Colonel, oracularly :

“that Miss Barillon is the daughter of a man of good fortune, but who lives close up to his income, and wants, as we all know at Boodle’s, every farthing that he has. The man who marries your pretty friend will marry but a poor girl—well-born, accomplished, a beauty, and all that kind of thing, I grant you, but poor—some few thousands, *pour, tout potage*, at the outside. Barillon, from what I know of him, and I know him a little, is the last man to allow—I say *allow*, my dear boy—his daughter to marry a poor man. And quite right, too: a social pauper has no more business to unite himself with another social pauper than a man with a weak digestion has to dine habitually at City dinners. Matrimony, let me tell you, doesn’t change a woman—it unmasks her; and when a young couple have to put up with poverty and incessant self-denial, the mask falls from the woman’s face, ay, and from the man’s, too, for the matter of that, pretty soon after the parson has tied the knot. You saw that young fellow Lam-

bert, who was with them? Well, they tell me he is immensely rich—and so he ought to be, for his father is vulgar enough—and, depend upon it, Barillon will make a match of it, if he can!”

“Oh, bosh!” began Kit.

“Now don’t use slang. Slang is to the mind what dissipation is to the body.”

“Well, nonsense then! I’m sure Miss Barillon would never accept him.”

“A well-bred young lady,” said the Colonel, tartly, “should always accept the choice desired for her by her parents; depend upon it they know best, for they have an eye to the future, whereas the young woman only has an eye to the present, and, when left to herself, generally manages to throw herself away.”

“So if Miss Barillon married me, she would throw herself away? Thanks!” said Kit.

“Both of you would throw yourselves away. Miss Barillon, because she would have to live as she had hitherto been unaccustomed, and therefore, in all pro-

bability, would soon begin to pine in secret, and nag you openly: women are not all angels; we men call them so, but, as the cynic says, men always call the worst things by the best names. And you would throw yourself away, because a poor marriage means to the man, life without a future; and life without a future, my dear Kit, is a *cul de sac*!"

They had now arrived at the Deanery, and the conversation ended.

What a difference there often is in this world between what we anticipate and what we realize! We go and visit people whom we expect, and are prepared, to dislike, and to our surprise we find them the most delightful company. We are introduced to those whom we are led to admire, respect, or reverence, and on a better acquaintance we find them disagreeable, opinionated, conceited, and overrated. We go to a place anticipating boredom, and we find Elysium, or *vice versâ*. We may take it, I think, as a rule, that our real pleasures come

upon us when we the least expect them, whilst our disappointments are oftener the keener from the contrast they represent to our anticipations. It was so in this instance with Kit. He had conjured up scene after scene, bright with Muriel's presence, and with Muriel's sympathy; he had built castle after castle in the air, every ideal brick of which breathed of Muriel. In his eyes the exchange of St. Winifrid's for Dartvennis, was only valuable for the means it offered, or he believed it offered, for a closer and more intimate acquaintance with Muriel. And bitterly was he disappointed.

On their first meeting she had greeted him coldly, as we have seen, and on the subsequent occasions when she met him, her manner did not relax in reserve or restraint. He had dined once at Royston with his father and mother to meet several people in the neighbourhood, but beyond the stereotyped smiles of society and a few conventional phrases, Muriel honoured him with nothing more. He

was a little more fortunate the night the Barillons dined at the Deanery, for he managed to take her down, but though she chatted pleasantly enough with him, it was precisely as she would have chatted with an entire stranger. Once or twice he had met her on his country walks, riding or driving, but she contented herself with a bow and a smile, and never reined up to speak to him. He came across her, too, pretty often in the society of the neighbourhood, but never by word or glance did she offer him the encouragement he had hoped—nay expected.

One evening, the day before he returned to town, he saw her again at a certain Canon Boughton's, where he had been asked to dinner. He greeted her coldly and stiffly, and because such stiffness was unnatural to him, he blended it, though unconsciously to himself, with considerable hauteur. Muriel's pale face flushed rapidly for a second, and then recovered its wonted pallor. It was the first time he had so met her, but his dignity was hurt, and his self-respect touched by what

he properly considered her undeserved treatment of him. He saw that he had wounded her and he was pleased with himself. *Il faut se faire valoir.*

After dinner he was seated in a corner of the inner drawing-room, half hid by the heavy *portières* that hung on either side the archway which divided the two rooms, looking at some photographs of Dartvennis in an album.

"And how do you like Dartvennis, Mr. Mowbray?" said a sweet voice. It was Muriel, and she came and sat by his side. There was something of her old manner visible in the smile on her face, and the soft light in her eyes.

"I prefer Riesenheim," answered Kit in a low voice, looking at his fair companion. She bent forward over the album, and pointed to a photograph of the Tor Mor with her fan.

"Of course you have been there?" she said.

"I suppose you forget all about those days?" said Kit, not heeding her question.

"What days?" said Muriel, attentively examining the workmanship of her fan.

"The days," said Kit, hastily and earnestly, "when you used to seem glad to see me, and were far nicer and kinder to me than now. Have I done anything to offend you, Miss Barillon, that you treat me so differently to what you once did?"

"Oh, pray don't think that," said she quickly, "pray don't think that!"

"But you *are* different to me, and I suppose you have a reason for making the difference?" said Kit.

No answer, but a downcast look and a busy plucking at the down on the fan.

"I cannot tell you how miserable such difference renders me; it makes me quite hate this place, and long to get back to town again!"

"And when do you return to London?"

"To-morrow. I suppose you will be going up this season?"

"I do not think so. Papa wishes to remain at home this summer to look

after certain improvements he is effecting."

"Then I suppose we shall not meet again for some time?"

"I suppose not," replied Muriel, quietly.

"How glad the thought must make you!" said Kit, with a short, bitter laugh.

Muriel did not answer, but arranged a ribbon, and cast a glance round the room.

"Wont you sing? I remember you used to sing," she said after a pause.

"Yes, I feel in the humour for singing!" replied Kit, half savagely. "Do you know I had no idea you were such a coquette; do you always drop your friends as easily as you have dropped me?"

"How you love to limit our conversation to our two selves!" said Muriel, half playfully.

"Because one of our two selves is at the present moment the subject that most interests me," said Kit. "Tell me, Miss Barillon, do you wish to cut me? for it is very evident, for reasons best known to yourself, that a gulf which did not

before exist now yawns between us. Let me know, for it will simplify matters when next I come down here. One doesn't care about being suppliant!"

"I wish you to be sensible," said Muriel.

"And pray what do you mean by being sensible?" asked Kit.

"That is not fair," replied she half smiling, "to make me give an answer, and then expect me to interpret it."

"But what do you mean by sensible?" re-echoed Kit.

"Shall we change the conversation?" said Muriel, coldly. "Pray sing something. Mrs. Boughton will be so charmed if you will."

Kit crossed the room, sat down by the piano, and sang in his clear tenor voice, Wither's ballad, "Why should I be wasting in despair," with a degree of passion and spirit that added considerably both to the effect of the words and the music of the song. When he had finished he was most cordially thanked by the Canon's wife, and sat down by that esti-

mable lady's side, gaily chatting and laughing. Shortly afterwards he took his departure, and quitted the room, purposelessly shunning Muriel with his eyes, but not so effectually as not to see that the seat he had formerly occupied by her side was now possessed by Lambert.

The next day he returned to town with Scrope, who had been spending a few days at the Deanery and devoting himself with much attention to Rosa.

"It's all up between me and Miss Barillon," said Kit, as he bade adieu to his eldest sister; "she doesn't care a bit about me now. The French are quite right in making a weathercock feminine."

"You are complimentary; but I think you are mistaken about Miss Barillon. However, I shall be able to know better when we become more intimate with her. Rest assured I shall keep you posted up in all the news about her."

"Do, and I'll return the compliment by letting you know all about Scrope," said Kit, laughing.

“Oh you silly boy!” said Rosa, flushing, and affectionately kissing her brother.

Four hours afterwards both the young men were in town.

Kit little thought what the forced composure and acted coldness of Muriel when in his society cost the poor girl. Nothing but the sternest sense of principle could have supported her in the bitter struggle with herself for the mastery.

When she heard that Kit was coming to Dartvennis she decided upon adopting one of two courses of action. If she found that he had forgotten her or only regarded her with that politeness which is next door to indifference, she would greet him kindly and cordially, as one who was content to be an acquaintance and nothing more. But if she found that the sentiments she knew she had created at Riesenheim were still as vivid as ever, she would draw back and do all in her power to discourage him.

It did not take her long to see that the second course was the one she had to decide upon. It was a bitter decision to arrive at

—all the more bitter now, because she felt that love still exercised its sway over Kit, and that though she must change he had not. Dearly would she have liked to talk to him as of old, to have had the same easy exchange of confidences as before, and to be as friendly to him as a sister, but with the sentiments that no mere sister could feel. But it could not be, it was not right that it should be.

Her father had told her his views about the matter, and it was her duty to act according to them, and not to encourage hopes that could never be realised. It was hard—harder perhaps for her to do than for Kit to bear—but honour told her it was right.

She had acted therefore as it seemed to her best in her occasional interviews with the man she knew was her admirer.

On the altar of filial duty she had sacrificed the dictates of her heart, and she felt that she was free from reproach. At the same time her resolve was that the obedience she owed to her father should be a negative one. She would not marry or

encourage anybody her father objected to, but more than that, what was due to herself, would not permit. She would discourage Kit Mowbray, but nothing would make her encourage Andrew Lambert. In that she was resolved, and inclination in Lambert's case made resolve all the stronger.





CHAPTER VIII.

“LABORARE EST ORARE.”

THERE is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in idleness alone is there perpetual despair. . . . Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! All true work is religion; and whatsoever religion is not work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it shall have no harbour. Admirable was that of the old monks, ‘*Laborare est Orare*’—‘Work is Worship.’ . . . ‘Work while it is called to-day, for

the night cometh wherein no man can work.’ ”

These grand words of Carlyle form no inapplicable introduction to the course Kit mapped out for himself shortly after obtaining his appointment. He saw, as Lord Salamis had well told him, that his future was in his own hands, and that if he chose to put his shoulder vigorously to the official wheel, a far from unsatisfactory career lay before him. The Board, unlike the generality of public offices, where promotion moves in a narrow groove and seniority is the order of the day, possessed in its gift numerous good berths both at home and abroad, which, though not *necessarily* given to the officials of the Department (as we have seen in the case of Mr. Bateman), were, however, seldom withheld from the industrious and deserving.

Kit soon discovered the expediency of acquiring every information respecting the work and special character of his department, and of proving to his chief that he was not one of his gracious Sovereign’s “hard bargains.”

Fortunately for himself, he possessed one of those happy minds which, through any mass of irrelevant matter, can go straight to the point, and instinctively knows what to accept and what to reject. An intellect thus ordered, though by no means devoid of originality, is, as a general rule, far more powerful in acquisitiveness than in the creative capacities.

Kit possessed in a singular degree the talent for acquiring, arranging, and selecting information — what he learnt he learnt thoroughly, and digested to the smallest fact everything that he read. At the University, where the chief exercise of the mental faculties resolves itself into acquisitiveness, this aptitude for collecting and retaining knowledge had stood him in good stead. His historical essays, by which he had won, as I have already said, the Arnold and the Stanhope, were much praised, and had been regarded as no slight feather in his academical cap; but the whole secret of their excellence was the clever and pithy way in which the *facts* concerning the

period were collected, summed up, and arranged. His research was very praiseworthy; his dexterity in condensing a mass of information into a readable shape considerable; but still, of original ideas, original opinions, or original conclusions there was not much. These essays were, if the truth be told, only a careful *précis* of events, coloured by the views and teaching of the most eminent writers on the subject—and little more.

Not that Kit was then wanting in originality, but he had deemed it wise to give his creative faculty small scope for active play. As he sensibly said, “What I acquire, if I go to the right sources, is invaluable; what I could create would in all probability be very much the contrary. Let me bide my time till my mind is matured and enriched by culture, and then when the day comes perhaps full play may be given to originality in thought or design.” And so, whilst some of the men in his set were embarking in scientific inquiries of their own raising, in the elucidation of metaphysical problems such as had never been

heard of in the whole range of philosophy, from the days of Thales to the days of Comte; in writing epic poems, in writing leading articles for petty newspapers, in preparing comedies that were never acted and novels that were never published, Kit was content to be thought a plodder and "no genius." But the plodder took a good degree, and many of the "geniuses" were, I fear, sorely ploughed. If the history of successful men be studied, I think it will be found that by far the greater number have been satisfied in spending their youth in widening and deepening their foundations before attempting any of the designs of the architect. It is as well to have plenty of bricks and mortar before trying to build. Some young men think the contrary; hence those unfinished erections one comes across in the regions of literature, science, and art.

As a junior examiner in the Board, Kit still adhered to his policy of acquisitiveness. He was surrounded by many of his colleagues who were constantly wasting their own time and that of their listeners by expressing their opinions upon how the

Board should be managed, how conventions should be entered into, how despatches should be drawn up, how the whole system of international politics should be reconstructed, what “Salamis ought to do,” what “the Government ought to do,” what everybody ought to do—in fact, they were so busy in advising others what to do, that they found no time for doing anything themselves.

Kit smiled with his usual geniality at the remarks of these shining lights, but seldom entered into argument with them. Before he gave his opinion upon any subject he thought it necessary to know something about it, and as yet he was but a tyro in official ways. Quietly and methodically, however, he was busy every moment of his time in studying the machinery of the Board and the mode in which the different complications of the engine were put in motion. He read up in the letter books of the office the whole history of its organization; he studied the evidence given before committees in piles upon piles of Blue Books; he worked at the indexes to the

official archives, and knew every convention that had been entered into, and noted down in a little mem.-book of his own the salient points connected with each convention, when it had been made, modified, ratified, and annulled. Thus it was not long before he acquired a knowledge connected with his department which few even of his seniors possessed.

Not that there was anything very wonderful in all this. Any of Kit's colleagues could have done the same, but not all cared to put themselves to the trouble. Some, like Pemberton, were content with doing the smallest amount of work it was possible with official safety to perform, and were far more interested in their pursuit of the pleasures of the town than in that of knowledge. Others, like Lumley, "hated drudgery," despised the work of the Board, and in leisure moments betook themselves to the charms of literature; wrote books, reviews, leading articles, and fine art criticisms.

"What's the good of grinding?" said these official *litterati* to Kit; "it's all hum-

bug about there being any scope for ambition in this place. You may work like a nigger, and all the encouragement you get is to see a cursed agitator like Bateman put over your head. It is a much better plan to try and get a name out of the office."

Others again, like Foote or De Bohun, were young men with comfortable private allowances, or who had married women with money, and therefore "didn't see the fun" of any severe exercise of zeal or industry. But still there were many, who, like Kit, steadily worked for future advancement, and whose aim, like his, was to stand well with the heads of the department. These latter soon began to regard Mowbray as a rival, and were prepared to dislike him with that jealousy which is so often felt by men in the same walk of life towards a brother likely to be successful.

It was of course known that Kit was "a friend of Salamis," and consequently the plodders expected that the new junior examiner would be speedily advanced. But my hero saw no reasons for such expecta-

tions. On his appointment to the Board he had been asked by Lord Salamis to call upon him; but in the interview that took place there was not much to betoken favouritism, or to augur great things from. The Lord President greeted Kit kindly and cordially enough, but there was a little stiffness in his manner, and some of that official air which is not pleasant to subordinates. After a little conversation on matters of a personal interest, the statesman told Kit the department he was to enter, sketched briefly the nature of his duties, and then politely handed him over to Mr. Bateman. This interview, which lasted about ten minutes, and during which Kit owned he felt "confoundedly like a clerk," was the only attention—except once being asked to dinner, and twice being offered a mount to accompany little Violet in the Row—that my hero had as yet received from the great man.

The apparent coldness of the minister is easily explained. Lord Salamis had no intention of treating Kit with such friend-

ship as to make him anticipate future favours without their being fully deserved.

"If he gets on," said the peer to himself, "he must succeed by industry, not by sheer favouritism. Protection must not mean idleness—it sets a bad example. I shall keep my eye on him, and if he is industrious, well and good; he'll find me no bad friend. I am quite prepared to like him, and I hope he will work; but youth, like woman, is very deceptive. Anyhow, I shall not act so as to make him rely more on my friendship than on his own energies. If he doesn't work—well, I have given him an appointment which many men as good, and better perhaps than himself, would most gladly accept." And the minister cast a glance upon his writing-table, where there were letters upon letters, from a quarter of the peerage and half the squirearchy, asking for appointments in the Board for second sons or favourite nephews.

Meanwhile Kit, mindful of the advice of Lord Salamis — but, perhaps, with a

little of the *Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici expertus metuit* sort of feeling—still kept on slaving away at his duties. Writing letters, assisting in drawing up parliamentary returns, making *précis* of despatches, docketing reports, indexing lists, searching for references, and various other duties, kept him in constant employment.

He could have shirked his work, like Pemberton and the rest, by making it extend over an indefinite period, but he made it a rule to finish everything entrusted to him as speedily as possible.

The assistant-secretaries of the Board therefore soon found out that they possessed a willing worker in the shape of Mr. Mowbray, and the consequence was, that whilst Pemberton had plenty of time in office hours to make up his betting-book, to pay occasional visits to 'Tattersall's, to lunch at his clubs, to run now and then down to the Stock Exchange, and to take any amount of sick leave; whilst Foote read novels, smoked cigarettes, disappointed his creditors, and received his friends; whilst Lumley wrote his articles, and De Bohun

came late and went away early, Kit was up to his eyes in incessant and laborious work. No sooner had he sent in despatches or reports, than more despatches and more reports were handed him by the messengers.

“Fat lot you get out of sapping like that, Mowbray,” said Pemberton, seated in an easy-chair, with his legs on an inverted waste-paper basket, studying the programme of the Gun Club and Hurlingham, which lay on his lap; “the more you do the more you have to do, and it don’t pay, my dear fellow. Besides, you’re spoiling the market most infernally. It’s our plan to lower the rate of work, and here you are doing your best to raise it. It’s beastly selfish of you!”

“I’ll bet you five to two, Mowbray, that you get nothing by all this grinding,” said Foote.

“Why don’t you go in for private work?” asked Lumley, looking up from *his* proofs; “I know a country paper that wants a London correspondent, and I shall be happy

to recommend you. Get your five guineas a week, you know. That's something, eh?"

"My politics prevent my working," said De Bohun, looking at a lot of photographs of French actresses that he had just received from Paris. "I believe in republican institutions, and am not therefore going to support a damnation monarchical government by my help. It supports me, and that is sufficient. What's the use of being a republican unless you mean to live at your country's expense?"

"But look here, old man, said Pemberton, getting up and placing his hand, heavily-ringed after the bad taste of the present day, on Kit's shoulder, "it's really all rot your grinding like this. You are much too good a fellow to go in for slavery; leave that to the smugs."

"And see them pass over my head," said Kit, trying to master the claims of the ducal line of Augustenberg.

"Pass over your head! bosh. There is precious little promotion in the shop for any of us, and what there is goes by merit, and that means favouritism. You know

Salamis ; he's sure to do something for you if he wishes to, and if he don't wish, all the toil of Hercules wont get you anything.

"Well, be it so," quietly replied Kit. "Whatever be the upshot of my hard grinding, as you call it, I think if a fellow is paid for certain work, he should do it. Such a course appears to me the commonest honesty. Besides, I take it, there *are* a good many pickings in the service for a man to look after."

"Oh, Scrope has put that into your head; because he's been lucky, and stands well for promotion, he thinks everybody else is to be the same."

"That's the way with all you fellows," laughed Kit ; "a man succeeds by industry, and you, of course, put it down to *luck*. I dare say if you had chosen to do what Scrope has done, you could have had his luck, as you call it."

"Could I?" said Pemberton, contemptuously ; "not a bit of it. Anyhow, I don't intend trying. Don't see the pull of putting on the pace when there's nothing to be got by it. All I can say is that it's

inferentially selfish of you doing twice as much as you need, for you must know it makes what we do, *nous autres*, who don't affect the industrious-apprentice dodge, appear precious little." And he retired to his seat somewhat sulkily for so good tempered a man.

But that morning one of the assistant-secretaries had been pleased to make invidious comparisons—which a kind friend had brought to the ears of Dick—between the work done by Mr. Pemberton, who had been three years in the service, and the work done by Mr. Mowbray, who had been but three months. The comparison was not in favour of Pemberton.

Though Kit's assiduity was discouraged by some of his colleagues, it was cordially encouraged by one whose opinion he valued, and whose good advice he both asked for and followed. Between Scrope and Kit a feeling of friendship was now springing up. The two men, though opposed to each other in many ways, yet found several points on which they were in thorough harmony. Kit was no friend to Ritualism, but still he could not help admiring the purity of life,

singleness of conduct, and high tone of principle reflected in the character of Scrope. He saw that the religion of his friend was a reality, not a sentiment; that his Ritualism was very different from the Ritualism so common at the present day, which amongst young men means music, and amongst young women means curates; with Scrope it was the faith of the saint, not the fashion of the worldling. Kindly and amiable, and sincerely anxious always to be doing good service, Scrope took Kit by the hand, and seeing that he was desirous of knowing his work and of doing it, put him in the way of acquiring much valuable information.

Besides, since Scrope had made Kit's acquaintance he had been introduced to the Canon's family, and during my hero's absence in Germany was anything but a stranger at the Rectory. It was at this time that Rosa Mowbray began to entertain remarkable views upon the practice and character of a Catholic Church, and was eternally illuminating portraits of saints in the most surprising of attitudes, and working embroidery

for altar-cloths. I think Scrope had something to do with this relapse from Protestantism. Perhaps, therefore, his interest in Kit had a double object.

However, this friendship was a decided advantage in more ways than one to Mowbray. No better official existed at the Board than Scrope. Though only a man of ten years' standing, he was already head of a department, having rapidly been passed over the Pembertons and men of that ilk who were his seniors, and it was certain that the next vacant Assistant-Secretaryship would be his; indeed, to compensate for his disappointment about Bateman, the Parliamentary Secretary had given him a written promise to that effect. Unlike many Government officials, who, having acquired a special knowledge, are loth to part with it to their juniors, preferring to keep it for themselves, Scrope gave Kit freely what information he possessed, and bade him store it up for future use. Thus he was both "coach" and friend, and in both capacities a most desirable acquaintance. But it was, perhaps, as friend that the

senior examiner rendered the best service to Kit. The life and opinions of Scrope were well known throughout the office, and the growing intimacy between the two men raised Mowbray in the estimation of the authorities of the Board.

“Scrope,” they said, “may have somewhat of the bigot in his composition, but he is, in the highest sense of the word, a gentleman and a Christian, and it speaks well for every one who enters this service to cultivate his acquaintance.”

On his return from Dartvennis Kit redoubled his official zeal in order to stamp out by hard work all sentimental associations connected with Muriel. Her acquaintance had been a pleasant dream; he had been rudely awakened, but it was idle to pine and lament. Besides, indignation now entered a little into his composition. He had been unaccustomed to be snubbed by the fair sex, and had no idea of degrading his manliness by cringing for smiles and favours. *Il faut se faire valoir.*

“If Miss Barillon,” said he to his great confidant, himself, “chooses to treat

me as an intimate friend one moment and coolly to drop me the next, be it so. I didn't expect it of her, but of course she has a perfect right to choose her list of acquaintances. Henceforth she need fear no intrusion on my part. When next we meet we shall meet as strangers." And he pursed up his mouth and looked very dignified; but in spite of this calm resolution, he felt pained and humiliated; his *amour propre* was wounded, and he was very vulnerable in that region.

True to her promise, his sister Rosa had written to him about Muriel, but as yet her letters did not throw much light upon the matter.

"I must own I cannot make Miss Barillon out," she wrote. "We are becoming daily *better* acquainted, and I hope *soon* to be able to arrive at the *true* state of her feelings. From what I have seen of her, I must say, though my sympathies are *not* in her favour, that she appears a very *sweet* and *nice* girl. At times I fancy she still loves you, for she is *so* reserved in talking about you, and yet cannot conceal her interest in what

relates to you. At *other* times she is all that the most complete indifference can suggest. I have a *kind* of idea, based though only on my surmises, that there is something *beneath* this conduct of hers that we have not yet guessed. Perhaps she is not mistress of her own actions. However, I hope to let you know *more*, my dear Kit, as my intimacy with your love developes. Pray give my kind regards to Mr. Scrope, and tell him that I hope soon to finish the illumination for his photograph of Saint Agatha."

And Kit had replied: "Please don't bother yourself about Miss Barillon; anything that relates to her has but scant interest for me."

Which, I think, plainly shows that the young man felt still the rankling of the arrow, and that, Burns-like, he could have said, had pride permitted him—

"'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside."

One afternoon in May, and shortly after their return from Dartvennis, Kit and Scrope

went down together to the Crystal Palace to hear a certain famous singer at one of the Saturday concerts. The performance over, Scrope was obliged to leave the Palace in order to be in town to arrange various proceedings for an approaching festival, which was to be conducted throughout in the most approved style of the Revival—full choral service, superbly decorated altar, incense, banners, processions, and priestly garments, that outrivalled Solomon in all his glory. Kit, not so ecclesiastically minded; thought he would wander about the galleries, bazaars, and cockney groves, hear the organ play, dine at the Palace, and not return to town till after the fireworks.

As he was sauntering about he found himself in one of the refreshment quarters, and being somewhat tired with his afternoon's amusement (where is fatigue more oppressively felt than at the Crystal Palace and Royal Academy?) seated himself on a cane chair before one of the little café-like tables, and ordered a cup of coffee. An

evening paper was on the table ; he took it up, and read and meditated.

He was aroused from his meditations by a growl proceeding from a table behind him.

“Confound the fellow !” said the growl ; “why don’t he bring my coffee ? Well, that’s one thing I *will* say of the Germans—they are the best waiters in the world—a nation of waiters, in fact, physically and intellectually. But a nation that is born to serve can never lead, that’s one comfort, with all this jabber about Teutonic supremacy. If there was a German waiter here now, I’d get my coffee at once. Oh, you’ve come at last, have you ? No penny for you, my man, till you hurry yourself a little faster !” And the growl subsided, and ended in a gurgle.

Kit turned round, rose from his chair, and said, “I think I have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Kingairloch ?”

“Ah, Mowbray !” said that gentleman, for it was no other ; “very glad to see you—how do you do ? And that’s no mere conventional question, let me tell you, when a man has been where you have lately come

from. And so you have managed to survive lager-beer, sauerkraut, and all the abominations of the community—I cannot call it society—of the Fatherland! Gad, how glad you must be to be in England again! By the way, I was much obliged to you for the information you sent me from Riesenheim.”

“I hope it was useful—perhaps rather too favourable to be useful, Mr. Kingairloch, eh?” laughed Kit.

“Well, I made selections from your statements—judicious selections,” replied Kingairloch, drily.

“Such as related only to the worse side of Teutonic life and character, I suppose?” said Kit.

“There is only one side to the Teutonic character—the worse side,” answered Kingairloch. “Well, and so you are in the Board of Conventions—nothing to do and something to get? You are fortunate. I heard all about you from your father.”

“Why, when did you see him?”

“Only a few days ago. I have been staying at Royston examining the Barillon

papers previous to reporting upon them. By the way, what a pretty girl that Miss Barillon is. Beautiful! You didn't come across beauty like that in your stay in the Fatherland, I'm convinced. Weren't you struck by the intense ugliness of the German people whilst abroad? I was—it affected me like a nightmare. There is something awful in the cruel animal look of the Germans, with their short round heads, big ears, heavy jowls, and over-fed figures! A nation of scholars, indeed! Bah! they are a collection of monstrosities!"

"Yes, Miss Barillon is very pretty, I think," said Kit, quietly, and wishing to turn the subject, for he knew that if Mr. Kingairloch got the bit of conversation anent the Teutons between his teeth there was no holding him. Accordingly he talked about the concert and the attractions of the Palace.

"When do you go back to town?" asked Mr. Kingairloch.

"Oh, not for some time. I intend to try the new dining-room and stay for the fireworks," replied Kit.

“And so shall I,” cried Kingairloch, gaily. “Bravo! we shall dine together, Mowbray, and I’ll be your host! Now, no refusal. When I ask a man to dinner you may be sure I intend to get something out of him, so you and I will be quite quits before we have done with each other. Let us look at the bill of fare to establish an appetite!”

And Mr. Kingairloch proved himself to be an excellent host; and as the two, after a capital dinner and a proper homage paid to the choicer vintages, were placidly puffing the cigar of digestion whilst enjoying from the balcony the view of the undulating Surrey landscape tinted by the sheen of the setting sun, thus quothed the host:—

“Have you ever tried your hand at writing, Mowbray?”

“I was weak enough to do something like that at Oxford and my weakness was rewarded by a few prizes—the Arnold was one of them,” said Kit, modestly, whilst moistening his lips with *Kimmel*.

“Ah!” said Kingairloch, eyeing him

keenly; “that looks well. And you have never tried anything of the kind since you left the University?”

“No; what should I write about, and for whom should I write?” asked Kit. “Besides, I don’t know whether I *could* write. Stringing a lot of facts together as one did at the University for prize essays wouldn’t be called writing, I suppose, in town?”

“That depends upon the facts and how they were strung together. If you come to that, all writing which isn’t purely imaginative is, more or less, facts strung together. Now suppose I make you an offer?”

“I should look upon it with that caution with which every Englishman is taught to regard the advances of a Scotchman,” laughed Kit. “‘*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*,’ as commercial members so love to quote to their constituents. Well, and what is the offer, pray?”

“I don’t know after such a remark that I ought to gratify your curiosity, my flippant young friend; well, however, let that pass!

But I must ask you to keep what I am going to say a secret at present."

"Certainly, but let me give you another cigar. Tobacco is the Muse of conversation. I can recommend those weeds, as I got them through the Spanish Embassy here." And Kit handed a well-filled case to Mr. Kingairloch.

The Scotchman puffed for a few minutes at the proffered cigar, and then made his offer. Briefly, it was this—Kingairloch was to be the editor of the new daily paper called the *Censor*, which the Rosicrucian had just started under the auspices of the Coalition Ministry, and he offered Kit an opening on that journal.

"I am fond of young blood, and I think you'll do," said he, curtly.

"I should like it of all things," replied Kit; "but I don't know that I *can* write."

"Try," puffed out Kingairloch. "Begin by reviewing, and work your way up to leaders. I'll send you 'Morgan's Epochs of Architecture' to make your first attempt upon. It's in three volumes, and I wish it

was in more, for I have never slept so well since I took to reading it. Don't write too long an introduction before you come to the matter of the book, that's all—that's always the fault of tyros."

"But I know nothing whatever of architecture," began Kit.

"That doesn't matter," growled Kingairloch. "Study Morgan's preface, and look up the subject in an Encyclopædia. Lend me a pencil to jot down the day you'll call upon me."

"I must apologize for its being a *German* silver one," said Kit, handing him the article.

"You and I will quarrel," said Kingairloch, grimly. "And now," added he, closing his note-book, "for the fireworks."



CHAPTER IX.

“STILL ACHIEVING, STILL PURSUING.”

NEXT to Lord Salamis, at the Board of Conventions, was a Mr. Lechmere, the Vice-President and Parliamentary Secretary. A man of an old Yorkshire family, the owner of a splendid property, the representative of half a shire, he was certainly born to much that women admire and men envy. Search the squirearchy through, and it would be hard to find a country gentleman who, as landlord, host, and sportsman, was a better, though far from being the most polished, representative of his order than Henry Greville Lechmere. In the blunt, almost coarse, way he put matters before the House when occasion required, in his style of dress—the big

white beaver hat, the loose coat with pockets as if for samples, the brown gaiters, &c.—in the whole bearing and character of the man, it was evident that rural life had marked him for its own, and that urban influences had been disdainfully repelled. He called a spade a spade, and said what he thought in practical vigorous Saxon. Still, both enemy and friend knew that, brusque and coarse as he sometimes was, he was never aught than frank, honest, and straightforward—a rough diamond, it is true; but still a diamond, and no mock paste. He cared not for society. Women bothered him—he couldn’t understand them, nor did he think them worth the understanding. He told them so, and remained a bachelor. “It’s only the very young men who marry nowadays,” he said; “old birds are never caught with chaff.”

But, though a Frenchman would have thought Mr. Lechmere somewhat of a boor, though a scholar would have thought a little more culture might have improved him, and a lady that there was room for

more refinement, yet, in his own way, the vice-president was a sound and able man. He was clear-headed, had strong ideas about substantial justice, and never spoke unless he knew what he was talking about. In everything relating to gun, rod, and saddle he was *facile princeps*. Few men were better judges of the points of a horse or the breeding of a hound, few could pilot a four-in-hand with more skill, few could beat his prowess in the hunting-field or his powers of endurance on the moor. Sport of all kinds was as the very air he breathed, and he cared little for any other atmosphere.

Family considerations had forced him into Parliament, but his legislative duties sat lightly on him. He seldom came up to town till after the hunting, and the sun of July always saw him in his Yorkshire home, making preparations for going north. What could have induced such a man, one of good fortune and no ambition, to accept office it was difficult to say. None knew, and I believe he knew not himself. "Sarlamis asked me to take the place," he said;

"and I was darned oaf enough to say yes," was all the explanation he could ever offer.

Like many men who have much to conserve, and yet read little, Mr. Lechmere was the most unflinching and obstinate of Tory squires.

The title of Conservative he spurned with the bitterest contempt as a miserable compromise of opinions. He was a Tory, he came from a long line of Tories, and the name was quite good enough for *him*. "He wanted none of the new-fangled names which prigs and adventurers invented; he'd stand in the old paths, and none need fear *his* ever going astray." The social and political past he loved; the social and political present he cordially detested. Everything devoid of the sanction of antiquity he hated—the equality of modern society, the new code of honour, the democratic tone in politics, the spread of religious toleration, the influence of the press—in short, the reformation and revolution he everywhere saw around him working their way, were as poison to him. As he surveyed the march of Progress, he felt that he was almost an

anachronism ; he cursed the times, as out of joint ; and mourned that his lines had fallen in such a diabolical epoch of his country's history.

Year after year he became more and more assured that "England was going to the devil."

"But what can you expect?" he growled; "you swop a wise and patriotic aristocracy for a vulgar and interested plutocracy, and then wonder at misgovernment! You laugh at Protection, and then wonder at commercial panics and agricultural distress! You emancipate the Roman Catholics, and then wonder at the spread of Popery! You free these sneaking Dissenters from disabilities, and then marvel at their agitation! You legalise Trades Unions, and then are astonished at the antagonism between labour and capital! You support a cheap press, and then wonder at the spread of sedition! You over-educate the masses—darnn the masses!—and then wonder at their unhealthy competition with the middle classes! You burlesque Nature,

and wonder that people wont call the darnned thing, Art! You act as an island, not as an Empire, and then wonder at Colonial discontent! You regard politics only through the medium of commercial interests, and then wonder at the decline of national prestige! You encourage pusillanimity, and call it Arbitration! You weaken strength, and call it Reduction! You impair efficiency, and call it Economy! Bah! what do you do? What have you done since '32 but make Reform synonymous with revolution and commercial advantages with cowardly relinquishments? Zounds, the country is going to the devil—and it wont be much of a catch when he gets it!"

Such was the man with whom Kit was now to come into contact.

About this time there ensued a foreign complication, anent the Schleswig-Holstein question, which could only be solved by reference to a certain important bundle of documents preserved among the archives of the Board of Conventions. The question

came before Parliament, and Mr. Lechmere promised that by the following night the papers under discussion should lie on the table of the House. Accordingly, search was at once made by a Mr. Holland, the *précis* writer to the Board, whose duty it was to preserve all conventions and guarantees in the strong-room of his department. But the search turned out in vain. The iron cages which contained the documents relating to that period, were most carefully examined, but still the special bundle of papers was conspicuous by its absence. It was nowhere. Could it have been incorporated by mistake with the documents belonging to a different country? but to search through tons of conventions would be a matter of time, and time pressed. Could it have been sent to any embassy abroad for a casual inspection? The letter-book was examined, but there was no evidence that such bundle had ever been asked for by any of the secretaries of legation. Where the deuce could this bundle be? It was very awkward. The Board was nervous—it would never do—in the present in-

teresting phase of Danish affairs, to tell the House that the papers were not forthcoming! The enemies of the Board (and their name was Legion) would at once want to know “What caused the delay? why there should be any delay? was it not the business of every public officer to obey readily the wishes of the House of Commons? The staff of the Board was a large one. What did it do for the vast sums with which it was credited in the estimates? Would the Vice-President kindly explain why the promise he gave last night was not carried out, as such conduct was a very bad precedent for the imitation of other public departments, &c. &c. &c.?” Why, there were Scotch and Irish members who would talk for a month, on the subject. The bundle *must* be found.

Lord Salamis was very irritable, and in one of his nastiest moods; his private secretary thought it advisable to keep in his own room that day, and not to cross the path of his chief oftener than was positively needful.

Mr. Lechmere was in an awful rage, and used the most wicked language to Mr. Holland, the *précis* writer, who was a mild and amiable gentleman, with a taste for divinity.

The various heads of departments were sorely troubled in their minds, and felt like men on the eve of an unpleasant *exposé*. Indeed, the dignified monotony of the Board was unpleasantly diversified.

Now it so happened that Kit, whilst acquiring his private information respecting the working of the office, had made a diligent examination of the archives contained in the strong room. He had inspected in a general way the various documents, had ascertained the countries with which they were connected, and had noted down the different periods over which they extended. Whilst engaged in this, according to Pemberton, work of supererogation, he had come across the very bundle which was now causing such commotion. The bundle had impressed itself on his mind from the fact that, though its contents related to Danish affairs, it

was yet incorporated with papers belonging entirely to the Holy Places. He had made a little note in his private book concerning the apparent inconsistency of placing documents which related to one subject with others which related to something quite different; and had at first intended mentioning the fact to the *précis* writer, but afterwards thought it prudent not to interfere with a department with which he was in no way connected, and perhaps only to get an official snub for his pains. The matter had therefore passed from his mind, and it was not till Scrope now told him of the commotion that the absence of the papers was causing that the fact of their misplacement was reviewed.

“Oh, I can settle all that,” said Kit; “I know where the papers are. I thought they were misplaced when I looked at them for the first time.” And he showed Scrope his note-book.

“Go to Holland at once then,” said Scrope, “and mention the fact; he will be overjoyed at the discovery.”

Kit accordingly ran downstairs to Hol-

land's room, where he found the polite and amiable *précis* writer in a state between agitation at the disappearance of the papers and indignation at having been so improperly rated by Mr. Lechmere.

"I say, Mr. Holland," said Kit, "I know where the bundle is. Instead of being placed with the Danish and Baltic documents in Press M, it has been put with the Russian and Black Sea Conventions in Press E."

"And pray how do you know that?" asked Mr. Holland, astonished and a little irritated.

Kit explained that he had had access to the archives through Scrope, and had utilized the opportunity by compiling a little handbook for his own private purposes. He showed his note-book to Mr. Holland, who carefully examined it.

"Such zeal does you great credit, Mr. Mowbray—great credit!" said he; "and you may rest assured that it will not be thrown away here. I shall at once get the papers, and communicate the fact to Mr. Lechmere. Good morning; I am extremely

indebted to you." And he shook Kit warmly by the hand.

Mr. Holland went to the strong-room, got hold of the papers, and then hastened downstairs to the Vice-President's room.

Mr. Lechmere was seated in his American rocking-chair, attentively examining a new bit, which he was having worked according to a design of his own. He was told that the papers were found. Delighted at hearing of their discovery, he naturally asked how they had been obtained. Mr. Holland, who was a thorough gentleman, and had no idea of getting credit for what was due to another, very generously attributed the whole matter to Mowbray, and at the same time put in a good word for Kit's zeal and diligence.

"Oh, he's a smart man, this Mr. Mowbray," said Mr. Lechmere; "I've heard of him before—he does his work well, they all say. Well, thank heaven, those papers have been found at last, for I was cursedly worried about them! I'm afraid I was rather out of temper with you, Holland, at the time. I apologize." And he extended

his hand, which was readily grasped by the *précis* writer. "By the way, a man is going to dine with me to-morrow night; you had better come too."

Mr. Holland said he would be very happy, and took his departure to arrange about the precious bundle.

It was rather Mr. Lechmere's way to lose his temper when official matters annoyed him, "row" his subordinates in language anything but parliamentary, and then end by an apology, an invitation to dinner, or the offer of a mount on one of his Yorkshire hacks. There was a good deal of light and shade in the character of the Vice-President, but the light predominated.

Having fully examined the new bit, Mr. Lechmere now sauntered into the room of Lord Salamis, which was on the other side of the corridor. He found the peer busily writing, and surrounded by Blue Books and volumes of Hansard.

"What a glutton for work you are, Sarlamis," said his Vice, seating himself in an easy-chair, and looking up an address

in the Red Book. "Well, the papers have been found."

"Have they? Where were they?" asked his lordship, looking up from an analysis of the Treaty of London.

Mr. Lechmere stated what he heard from the *précis* writer, and mentioned the part Mowbray had played in the discovery.

"Mowbray!" said Lord Salamis, astonished. "What has he to do with the archives? He is in the Blue Book and Statistics Department."

"Yes, but he seems to be rather a shining light, who is going to illumine us all; for, not content with knowing the working of his own department, he has been acquiring, by personal investigation, it appears, matters relating to the other branches of the service as well. I don't know him personally, but he seems a smart man to have here. Oh, of course; he was your appointment, I forgot that. Going to do anything for him?"

"Certainly," replied Lord Salamis. "I hear on every side excellent accounts about him. I have been intending to send for

him every day in order to have him transferred to your department. I shall send for him to-day."

And Kit was accordingly sent for as soon as Lord Salamis and Mr. Lechmere had done chatting. The great man received him in the friendliest way, and said that it was with much pleasure he heard such good accounts of his industry and steadiness. After a very short conversation, Lord Salamis soon ascertained how it was that Kit had made himself master of much of the working of the department.

"I want your help now, Mowbray," said the peer to Kit. "Upton has been called away. Sit down here, and give me a *précis* of that despatch whilst I finish this letter."

Kit sat down, and at the end of half an hour his *précis* was finished, the whole carefully condensed, legibly written, and fully indexed.

"You work quickly and accurately," said Lord Salamis, examining Kit's performance. "Rapidity of execution often means inaccuracy of design, but it is not

so in your case, I am glad to see. Very well. Now take that paper over there: it is full of brief facts. Extend those facts into proper English for a Blue Book Report."

Again Kit sat down and did as he was required, the result also to his chief's satisfaction.

"And now answer those letters which I have received this morning. On their backs you will see jotted down by me in short what is the nature of the reply to be given in each case."

For a whole hour Kit was busy at the correspondence, but at the end of that time he had finished his task.

"Well, Mowbray, I am very much obliged to you for your afternoon's help," said the peer, rising; "I told you I would advance your interest if you worked. You have worked; continue to do so, and rest assured that I will not forget my promise." And Kit, flushing with gratification, was bowed out.

At the end of a week he was transferred to the secretaries' department of the Board, with Mr. Lechmere as his direct chief.

Such a transfer was always regarded as on the high road to promotion, for the secretaries' department was the branch in which all the most private and important concerns of the office were transacted, and none but men of some mark were ever appointed to assist in its proceedings. It was from this department that the young men who afterwards served as Private Secretaries were alone drawn. And now, too, it was that Lord Salamis mingled with his official attention much private good feeling; asked Kit frequently to dinner, lounged about the town with his arm linked in that of the young man's (on these occasions Kit put on an air of hauteur which I am given to understand created him enemies), gave him constantly a mount, so that he could accompany Violet and himself in their daily ride in the Row, and showed him those numerous kindnesses which were nothing for Lord Salamis to grant, but which, coming from such a source, were very flattering to the self-respect and self-love of a young man.

As a pleasing relief to the monotony of

official life Kit was now employing much of his leisure time in writing for the new journal conducted by Mr. Kingairloch. There could be no two opinions respecting the *Censor*. From the very first day of its issue its success was never in question. It supplied a great want. The Eclectic party had come to the conclusion at one of its Committee meetings at the Rosicrucian Club that it required a cheap and able newspaper, which would look at things political and ecclesiastical, literary and commercial, from a purely moderate point of view, without either falling foul of the Scylla of unbending Toryism or wrecking itself against the Charybdis of red-hot democracy. *In medio tutissimus ibis* was the motto of the *Censor*, and most carefully was it acted upon. Nothing extreme on any point ever found its way into the columns of the new journal. Well supported by the trustees of the Rosicrucian, well manned by a good staff of writers, and well supplied with the best and earliest information that money could buy, the paper rapidly made its way. Advertise-

ments poured in ; country agents demanded larger supplies ; politicians voted its leaders as the soundest and most sensible things in journalism ; City men swore by its City article ; the Church was pleased that it was Catholic without Popery, and Protestant without dissent ; people who looked to the press for their opinions preferred to adopt those of the *Censor* to any other paper ; in short, it was a success.

Halifax himself could not have suggested a better "trimmer's" policy than was carried out by the *Censor*. The aristocracy liked it because it was properly deferential to privilege and prerogative, and held sound views (which meant views that coincided with those held by the aristocracy) upon the land question, game laws, and all vested interests. The middle classes liked it because it took a large and liberal view (that meant a mercantile view) of all commercial subjects, and advocated freedom in trade, general progress, and the most complete toleration. The lower classes liked it because it took the right view (that meant the working man's view) of all matters relating to

labour and capital. On this point, however, it must be owned that the teaching of the *Censor* was of so skilful a nature that while it pretended to side with the labourer, it really, and unconsciously to the labourer, supported the capitalist. Indeed, everybody was pleased with it, and never did journalism blow hot and cold, state one thing to-day and contradict it to-morrow, be all things to all men, and sit continually between two stools without ever falling, with more consummate caution and dexterity than did the *Censor*. Lord Salamis, on the starting of the paper, had been asked to give it his political support and to become one of its trustees, but he replied in his most unpleasant manner, “I never have anything to do with newspapers. I hate irritating omniscience.”

And certainly omniscient, if not irritating, was the *Censor*. Never did it acknowledge ignorance. Its enemies said that “if it had no facts, it at once drew upon its imagination, on the principle that any lie was better than no news.” But this I cannot believe.

Kit had gone gallantly through Morgan's "Epochs of Architecture," and with the aid of the distinguished author's preface, and the article on the subject in the "Encyclopædia," had written a readable, and apparently deep review. I have no doubt, however, that Mr. Morgan smiled grimly as he perused Kit's two columns, and felt considerable satisfaction at being praised and patronized by so eminent a critic. But to the general readers of the paper the article appeared very able and discriminating, and if the public were content, why, that was everything.

As for Kit, he read and re-read his article about a hundred times ; showed it to Scrope ; showed it to his uncle, aunt, cousins, friends—everybody in fact. I believe he would have showed it to his landlady had he not that very morning severely reprimanded that unhappy female, who was subject to spasms and epileptic fits, for her bad habit of regarding his wine-cellar too much in the nature of a dispensary. You may be sure that he sent various copies of the *Censor* down to the Deanery, and that his sisters

vowed there never was so brilliant a writer, nor so splendid a critic.

We all of us have our little weaknesses, and our first appearances in any character are not always unpleasant. Yon colonel detests the “war paint,” as if it were a livery, but yet he can remember the time when he first donned Her Majesty’s uniform, and with what difficulty it was he tore himself from his looking-glass to attend parade. Go down to Westminster Hall, and see the lad “called” but yesterday, how proud he is of his wig, bands, and gown, and of his *entrée* by right into court! Even the most pious curate, I am convinced, feels a degree of vanity in reading prayers for the first time in hood and surplice. We all know how vain the young bride is of being a married woman, of her title of madam, and of her right to take the *pas* of damsels still in the cold shade of spinsterhood. A time soon comes, however, when this glamour of novelty wears off, and sentiment dissolves into hard practical business. The yearling bride soon ceases to be vainly proud of her position,

her new dresses and new jewellery, but betakes herself soberly to the management of babies and household books. It is not long before the curate becomes indifferent to hood and gown, and if he be worth his salt substitutes interest in his parish work for care of his personal appearance. The young counsellor learned in the law speedily gets over the pride of forensic attire, and is fortunate if he as speedily gets on in his profession.

And so it was with Kit. After some dozen articles, he began almost to hate the sight and smell of "copy," and would as soon have thought of trotting out his productions in the *Censor*, for the special admiration of his friends, as he would of believing everything he read in that distinguished journal. Still he determined to take every advantage of the opportunity offered him by Kingairloch, and one day, perhaps, of attaining literary distinction. He wrote regularly, and as soon as he felt his pinions strong enough for a little flight put in one or two

original articles on social subjects. Though crude and too sweeping in their strictures, they were yet fresh and bright, and received the approval of the editor. He was asked to write a few more, and, nothing loth to quit his manufacture of reviews (for he felt that it was almost dishonest to give an opinion upon subjects of which he acquired everything from the books he reviewed. “My praise,” he said, “is an impertinence, whilst my abuse is next door to a crime”), took to his new work very kindly.

Gradually all subjects which related to social and social-political affairs—the morality of modern society, the increased cost of living, sanitary subjects, questions relating to pauperism, and the like—were entrusted to his hands. And now it was that he found his past reading of no little service. He wrote like an educated man; his articles were full of happy illustrations, and it was seldom that he could not draw some interesting anecdote into the matter of which he was treating, which gave point to his views or arguments.

It was not long before the staff of
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the *Censor* found Kit Mowbray a decided acquisition—a discovery which was equally shared by the readers of that journal. Unlike other newspapers, the *Censor* did not permit the insertion of anonymous articles. 'Every contribution, whether leader, review, or dramatic criticism, was signed by the writer in full, and it was seldom now that two days passed without the signature of "C. Mowbray" appearing at the foot of a column and a half of the letter-press of the *Censor*. Lumley said he was "quite the journalist," and almost envied him.

The new journal found various supporters within the secluded quarters of the Board, and was laid upon the little round tables in the waiting-rooms and ante-chambers side by side with the *Times*, to the rigid exclusion of the other representatives of English journalism.

Mr. Lechmere, as one of the *Censor's* trustees, was, of course, a most constant reader of the new paper, and not infrequently entered Mowbray's room, which was but separated from his by a greenbaize-door, to

have a chat upon political and literary matters.

It was the nature of Kit's duties to be thrown now much in contact with the Vice-President, and between the two a pleasant sort of acquaintanceship was gradually forming. Mr. Lechmere, though far from being a model official, knew much better what he was about than he was given credit for. Blunt and bluff, he hated red tape and all other official conventionalities, and used to knock off his work in a ready, business-like form, much to the horror of certain of the assistant-secretaries, who had been brought up in the old school of routine and formalism.

When official matters were brought before him for his decision, he had but two answers, "all right" and "darmned nonsense." If he said "all right," he made Kit write down his reply at once, and polish off-hand the whole business; but when he answered "darmned nonsense," no amount of persuasion would ever make him change his opinion, and those who ventured to argue with him on the point might con-

sider themselves very fortunate if they were not roundly taken to task in forcible language for differing from him.

Between the Vice-President and Kit, thanks to the sense of tact and the natural geniality of the young man, nothing had as yet ever tended to ruffle the even tenor of their official intercourse. Indeed, Kit often rather wished that Mr. Lechmere was not so favourably disposed to him, for that gentleman's constant intrusions into the adjoining apartment to talk about a horse, or a dog, or the action of a new breech-loader with my hero were no little obstacles in the way of the speedy execution of business.

Once a week it was Kit's duty to wend his way to the House of Commons in the evenings, to bring despatches and other documents for Mr. Lechmere's perusal and occasional signature. On these occasions he was not unusually asked by the Vice-President to dinner, in that most pleasant of club coffee-rooms, the Strangers' Room of the House of Commons. One evening, after having received such invitation, and as he was seated at the table

Mr. Lechmere generally secured, which commanded an immediate view of the Thames, a tall man, with curly white hair, a heavy sweeping moustache, and a very bronzed complexion, came up to them, and laid his hand heavily upon his host's shoulder, and said—

"Halloa, Lechmere! how do you do?"

"God bless me, Barillon!" replied Mr. Lechmere, "is that you? When the doose did you return? I thought you were in the Pacific, enjoying that freedom of morality which is the chief characteristic, I am told, of those parts—eh?"

"Oh, that's all over!" laughed Barillon. "I have resigned my governorship, married, and intend to settle for good in England."

"You married! Well, wonders will never cease. I should have thought you of all men, with your experiences, would have been the last to try *that* experiment," laughed Mr. Lechmere, with his loud "ha! ha!"

"Like Spanish securities, converted at last, you see!" said Barillon, pleasantly. "You must let me introduce you to Lady

Barillon when we return to town. We're going off next week to Riesenheim—the doctor recommends the waters to my wife. Bye, bye! going to dine with Harwood. See you in the smoking-room." And the stranger was about to turn away and walk to one of the opposite tables.

"You ought to congratulate me, too, Barillon. I have had a stroke of good fortune since last we met," said Mr. Lechmere, laughing.

"What! are you married too, my dear fellow?" began Barillon.

"I said *good* fortune," replied Mr. Lechmere, testily. "No, I have taken to office at last."

"How I pity the office!" laughed Barillon. "Talk to you about it afterwards." And he hurried off to the table where his host awaited him.

"What Barillon is that?" asked Kit. "Any relation of the Limeshire Barillons?"

"Of course. He's Sir George Barillon, the proper heir to Royston, only his brother was as mad as a hatter, and left it to the present man out of spite to Sir George.

whom he cordially hated. Gad! now that he has given up his governorship and is married—married a young woman, too, I’ll swear; they always do at his time of life—and is going to live in England, I should think he must feel rather sore at being ousted from the family place. I should, I know! Have some more wine? No? Well, then, let us come to the smoking-room.”





CHAPTER X.

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY.

PASS over the next two months. The London season had reached its culminating point, and was rapidly declining. The heat during the day was terrific, and panting *flâneurs*, wearied with the scorching Row, the dust of the afternoon Park, and the oppressive atmosphere at overcrowded hospitalities, were thinking pleasantly of their autumn engagements — the heather-crested moor, the brawling salmon river, Alpine snows, or the deep-blue ocean, watched lazily from the bulwarks of the speeding yacht. Fair damsels, pale and fagged from dinners, balls, and drums, were longing over afternoon teas for their country homes, croquet, archery, and the charms of rural life.

Chaperones were congratulating themselves that soon social martyrdom would be at an end for a time. Wearied counsel were thanking Heaven that soon the Long Vacation would usher in rest and change. Members of Parliament were rapidly passing clauses they had never studied and measures to which they objected, in order to escape from the boredom of St. Stephen's. The London clergy were making their arrangements for "duty" whilst spending their well-earned holiday abroad, or at the seaside. The Scotch, always the first to quit town, were rapidly moving north; everybody, in fact, was delighted that in another three weeks or so urban dissipation would be exchanged for rural relaxation.

Mowbray had made arrangements, as soon as vacation arrived, to spend a few days at Dartvennis, and then hasten on to Zermatt with several of his late University friends, who were bent on Alpine ascents. For the last few days the young man had been busy with Bradshaw, Murray, and Baedker, and was ever arranging and re-

arranging tours and pedestrian routes. The passes, peaks, and glaciers of the charming Cantons were as yet unknown ground to him, and he was looking forward with the keenest joy to his two months' leave of absence. But man proposes.

He was sitting one morning at his bureau, writing letters as usual, when his companion, Henry Leslie, a little fat man with spectacles and a profusion of red hair, who occupied the same position in the secretary's department as Scrope did in that of the Blue Books and Statistics, said—

"Have you seen the *Times* this morning, Mowbray?"

"Not yet; anything in it?"

"Of course not, there never is; everything that is worth reading is only to be found in the *Censor*," replied Leslie, nastily.

"I am glad you are coming round to that opinion," laughed Kit; "I knew a time would come when you would praise the *Censor*."

"I always praise it," said Leslie, sneer-

ingly. "It is true that its writers have evidently a supreme scorn for grammar, that its information is not to be relied upon, and that its views are as illogical as manufactured premises and distorted deductions can make them; but still the paper is well printed, and the advertisements are always interesting. However, you'll soon be transferred to a position in which you can exercise to the fullest extent your ungrammatical ability and love for the *reductio ad absurdum*."

"What! am I to take your place?" asked Kit, pleasantly.

Leslie did not reply, but read from the *Times*—

"Mr. Algernon Upton, of the Board of Conventions, and private secretary to Lord Salamis, has been appointed one of the Commissioners to the Board of Procrastinations."

"Well," added he, putting down the paper, "I suppose fawning is to have its reward!"

"Did Upton fawn?" asked Kit; "you generally have some pleasant word to de-

scribe the manner in which men obtain success."

"I was not alluding to Upton," replied Leslie, with a sneer.

"To whom then?" asked Kit.

"I suppose Upton will have a successor. Perhaps you prefer, though, to affect ignorance of such a contingency?" snarled Leslie.

"I never affect ignorance, Leslie; you have taught me what bad taste it is. But I don't see why I should take any especial interest in Upton's successor," replied Kit.

"I congratulate you; it is quite refreshing to sit with a man who professes to take no special interest in himself; however, you must excuse my hardly believing in such unselfishness."

"My dear fellow, I know enough of you to excuse you believing in anything but yourself. I suppose I am to conclude, after the flattering manner in which you have introduced the subject, that *I* am to be Lord Salamis' private secretary. I hope you'll be a true prophet. I have never had the slightest intimation that such good fortune was in store for me."

"Of course not," replied Leslie, spitefully, whilst continuing to read the paper.

"You seem to be in rather a pleasant mood this morning, Leslie," said Kit, smiling.

"I jostled against a Parsee as I came along here, and it ruffled me, I suppose. I hate people who worship the rising sun," said Leslie, without taking his eyes off the *Times*.

"Preferring them, of course, to worship you; for, like the sun, you aim at giving light to all. May you have *your* Parsees!" said Kit, continuing the work which the above conversation had interrupted.

Kit and Leslie were not on the most cordial terms, for the very excellent reason that few ever could be on good terms with Henry Leslie.

We are told by Sydney Smith that the Dissenters of Bicester were very fond of declaring that there was no such thing in their town as intellectual light until their arrival — all was wrapt in ignorance, incapacity, and the Established Church. Mr. Leslie was gifted with much of the arrogance and conceit of the Bicester Dissenters.

Until his appointment to the Board of Conventions he considered that no men of real culture or superior intellect had ever served on its staff. Though surrounded by many who had taken high honours at the University, and by a few who were fellows of their colleges, he calmly confessed to himself (and not always to himself) that he was the intellectual star of the office.

Clever and decently read he certainly was, but the manner in which he aired his talents was so offensive that one forgot his ability in the intensity of his conceit. He criticised everybody and everything—from Music to the Fathers, from Art to Mathematics—with the most insufferable air of superiority. Talk to him of a new book, he would reply that “the author couldn’t write English.” Tell him of some recent novelty in the scientific world, and he would reply, “It’s not new—been discovered before, only in a different way.” Show him a picture which was all the rage, and it was his opinion that the artist “had all the worst defects of his school without any of its charms”—and so on. But

while disparaging others he ever took care to exalt himself, and in all his criticisms his object was to show, either by implication or by positive statement, how very much better he could have done the work. The *ego* of his own intellect was the standard by which he measured everything, and therefore, whenever he said in his most dogmatic manner, "*I* cannot understand it," or "*I* have never heard of it," it was at once conclusive that the subject under discussion was beneath notice. Whenever any classical or French quotation was made in his presence he had also an offensive habit of asking what you said, and on his request being complied with, of saying "Oh!" and repeating the quotation *very* distinctly, as much as to say *that* is the way it should be pronounced. This was riling.

For such conceit Henry Leslie had a certain excuse. We are all apt to overestimate what is novel to us, and education and its advantages had not been so much a matter of course in the family of the Leslies as one might have expected. Indeed, Leslie *père* was a well-

to-do goldsmith and jeweller in the City, who, finding that among his boys he possessed a clever son, determined "to make a gentleman of him." From a private school the lad was sent to Cambridge, where he honourably closed his University career by becoming seventh wrangler. Being the first of his line who had ever been to college, "when I was at Cambridge," formed a not unusual prelude to his conversation with the stranger.

It was about this time that the Lord President of Conventions of that date appointed him to a junior examinership on the Board, as payment, it was said, for a heavy bill for pearls and plate contracted by the extravagant wife of that statesman. Entering the Board, the defects of Henry Leslie's rearing soon became apparent. At home he was surrounded by those to whom, socially and intellectually, he was greatly the superior, and lorded it over the parental circle with that despotism which is generally accorded to these dictators of a coterie. Thus he acquired a habit of not only laying down the law, but of imagining

that because education was a novelty to himself, and to those in his own sphere, it was equally a novelty to others. The snob can never understand how a man can be well-born, and yet not air his birth.

Soon after his appointment Leslie assumed the manners and tone of the "superior person" of the Board, and treated his colleagues very much in the same way as he treated his whole table of affinity. To a certain extent this conduct could also be extenuated. Being by birth the social inferior of every one in the Board, whilst intellectually he was the equal of all, he may, perhaps, have thought it incumbent on himself to assume a defensive tone, in order to preserve his own dignity. But a man always on the defensive scarcely fails to be offensive. Ever brooding on himself with the morbid egotism of self-love, Leslie was always under the impression that the secret of his birth was known to all; hence, tortured by his sense of social inferiority, and exalted by what he considered his intellectual superiority, he

became transformed into that curious combination of antitheses which one so often sees in men of the Leslie type—combative yet shrinkingly sensitive, arrogant yet humble, fearful of oppression yet ever oppressing, a master one moment, a slave the next. Not that he had any grounds for supposing that his birth was any reflection on himself; the officials in the Board, with the good taste and feeling of Englishmen, never once thought about the matter, and would willingly have held out the right-hand of fellowship to their new colleague, had not his morbid sensitiveness offensively repelled their advances. Nothing pained him more than to hear of the good fortune of others, for he had not been so successful as he had anticipated. He had written a work on the “Differential Calculus,” a treatise on “Plane Trigonometry,” two papers on “Sound,” and one on the “Multiple Stars,” but they had been deemed second hand, and little attention had been paid them. No wonder, therefore, he talked much of himself. Egoism is the offspring of failure.

Such was the man with whom Mowbray had passed the last two months of his official life. They were not particularly agreeable. Leslie, aware that Kit was on good terms with Lord Salamis, and likely to be speedily promoted, regarded his companion at once with that spontaneous dislike with which he was so abundantly blessed. His great delight was to say things which he knew would irritate Kit. On the first issue of the *Censor* he had taken in the paper, and thought rather well of it, but the moment he saw the name of "C. Mowbray", appended to certain of its articles, he at once ceased his perusal of the journal. "How any one can read the stuff written in modern journalism is beyond me," he used to say kindly to Kit. "There is only one paper that a gentleman" (he was rather fond of that word 'gentleman') "can read, and when he has seen the *Times*, what does he ever want with its miserable imitators? But then, of course, you will say the vulgar should have their journal. Quite so. The *Censor* has a large

circulation among the lower classes, I believe; has it not?" Kit used occasionally to spar with Leslie, but, as a rule, he thought it better taste to let the bitter, disappointed man go his own way without much hindrance.

And so Leslie would sneer at the clergy, Kit's father being in the Church (odd how men on the defensive ever begin the aggressive!); would ridicule the *Censor*, Kit being on its staff; would disparage athletic sports, Kit being their staunch supporter; would sneer at Stangate; "encourage pauperism, and call it charity," he used to say—and so on, without my hero paying much serious attention to his remarks. Still, such a man is never the most pleasant of company.

Shortly after Leslie had made his remarks concerning Upton, the door opened, and Collins, the messenger of Lord Salamis, entered, saying, "His lordship wishes to see you, Mr. Mowbray, if you please sir!"

"*Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!*"

shouted Leslie. "Let me congratulate you on your good fortune. I am delighted at it!"

"Are you?" said Kit; "I had no idea you were so good-natured; your appearance does you great injustice!" And with this Parthian shot, he quickly descended the stairs which led to the rooms of the Lord President.

On his arrival at the dark mahogany door he knocked, and a voice within, though not the voice of Lord Salamis, called out, "Come in." Kit entered. On the hearthrug was a tall, fair man of about nine-and-twenty, with delicate features, large dark-blue eyes, and a well tended silky chestnut beard. He at once came forward.

"You are Mowbray, I suppose? Let me introduce myself, my name is Upton. Sit down! Salamis has just gone out to receive a deputation from the 'Sahara Fertilization Society,' but will be back soon. I suppose you know why you are sent for?"

"No, I don't. I may have an idea about it, but perhaps it is a wrong one," answered Kit.

"The Chief is going to make you his secretary in my place."

"By Jove, really?" said Kit, delighted.

"Yes; you know I am going to the Board of Procrastinations."

"I just heard of it before I came down here. Congratulate you; it's a goodish berth, I suppose?"

"As times go; it means money—a thousand a year rising to twelve, with the prospect of being Chief Commissioner one day," said Upton, quietly. "Not bad, is it?"

"I should think not indeed!" laughed Kit.

"Oh, Salamis is a thundering good fellow to work with, and it's a man's own fault if he doesn't play his cards well with him. Remember that Mowbray. I suppose there isn't a Head of a Department in the country who bothers himself more about advancing his own men than Salamis. What I've got you

may get if you work the oracle properly."

"What do you mean by working the oracle properly? I don't know a bit what I am to do!" said Kit.

"Do? what you are to do? Why, everything that will save Salamis trouble without trespassing upon his prerogative. If you keep your eyes open and your wits about you, you'll soon learn to discriminate between what you can do yourself and what you must consult the Chief about."

"I am afraid it will be rather ticklish work?" said Kit.

"Not a bit," said Upton, easily; "it is as simple as shelling peas. I'll coach you free, gratis, all for nothing. Listen! Salamis comes at twelve, you come at eleven. You look over all his letters not marked 'private,' separate those that you can answer yourself from those that it is advisable to have advice upon, and shy the rest into the waste-paper basket."

"But surely such separation is not so simple a matter as you make out?" asked Kit.

"Simple, my dear fellow, as abusing your neighbour. All you want is tact and common sense. Suppose a commander in the Navy writes as one wrote yesterday, saying that he had the pleasure of traveling with Salamis last summer in the *coupé* of a diligence over the Simplon, and now takes the liberty of asking his lordship to use his interest with the Admiralty to get him a ship, you wouldn't bother the Chief about that, would you?"

"No, I should drop it into the waste-paper basket."

"Of course; and if a cracked astronomer writes, as one wrote a few days ago, that he has an infallible scheme for paying off the National Debt by a series of lottery tickets, and begs Salamis (whom by the way he doesn't know from Adam) to mention the matter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what would you do?"

"Waste-paper basket again," replied Kit, promptly.

"And if a Cambridge tutor, as was the case a week ago, writes to say that

he sees there are four assistant-secretaries receiving a salary of 1200*l.* per annum each, attached to the Board, and that he would be very happy to do the work of all of them for 600*l.* a year and a residence?"

"Insult to the department! Waste-paper basket, of course."

"And if a London builder writes, as one has just written this morning, to the effect that Salamis's house in Brook Street looks as if it wanted doing up, and that he would be happy to effect all the necessary repairs gratis, provided his lordship 'would strike a bargain,' and get his son a tide-waiter's place?"

"Bribery and corruption! Waste-paper basket."

"And of course the same fate should befall all letters from photographers asking to take Salamis's portrait, all begging letters from strangers, whether for money or appointments, all letters from pious people containing leaflets and good advice, all tradesmen's circulars, all appeals from City companies to have Salamis's name

down as a director, all abusive and threatening letters signed anonymously—*et hoc genus omne*, unless any of them are very funny, and if the Chief is in good humour (he is variable, is Salamis, like all nervous people)—you can bring a few in to show him.”

“Well, thanks to you, I think I know now what to avoid ; but what am I to take upon myself to answer ?”

“All inquiries respecting the Board and its duties which you can obtain from other sources than from Salamis, and which entail no personal responsibility upon yourself. For instance, if some one writes to know the date of a certain convention, what are its clauses, and when it was ratified, you can get that from Holland and needn't bother Salamis ; or if some merchant wishes to know whether a certain treaty affects the commerce of certain Chinese or Japanese ports ; or if any of the Religious Societies wish to know whether there is any clause in any convention prohibiting the action of the missionaries in certain parts—and in fact any question the answer of which is but the

result of common official experience. Here and there in some of these cases it is just as well to show the Chief what you have written."

"Well, I think I understand—and now what are the letters I am not to interfere with?" asked Kit. "It is very good of you to give me all this advice though."

"Not at all—Salamis told me in fact to put you *au courant* with your new duties. You want to know what you must not interfere with? Well, tact and common sense will teach you that. All matters, as I have said, which entail responsibility and which require the personal opinions of the Chief, you don't touch, but simply reply to as Salamis directs. Then you must not interfere with any of the invitations he receives for public dinners, for first view of exhibitions, for public meetings, and the like. Nor must you answer or suppress letters from fashionable women, who are friends of Salamis, asking him to do something for any of their *protégés*—from a butler who wants to be a doorkeeper, to a relation who wants to be an Inspector of Schools. Oh,

it is simple enough ; you'll soon get into it ! The great art of a private secretary, after all, is to know how to refuse without incivility, and to accept without responsibility."

"Thanks, very much. But haven't I to see people who call upon the Chief, or something of that kind ?"

"Yes, I forgot that. Well, there is no difficulty about it. As you divide Salamis's correspondence into three classes, the one for him to reply to, the other which you yourself reply to, and the third with which you supply the waste-paper basket ; so it is with Salamis's callers. There is the caller whom your tact and common sense tells you must be referred to Salamis, there is the caller whom you can deal with yourself, and there is the caller whom you metaphorically waste-paper basket."

"To distinguish the caller seems harder than to distinguish the correspondence," said Kit, laughing.

"Not a bit of it. The waste-paper basket caller, if I may so term him, is recognisable at once. He enters the room reverentially, bows to you humbly, sits on

the very edge of the chair that is handed to him, coughs nervously behind his new gloves—this kind of people, by the way, always wears new gloves and best hat when calling—and waits till you are ready with a sweet smile.”

“How do you mean ‘waits till you are ready?’” asked Kit.

“Of course, my dear fellow, you never *are* ready for this kind of people, don’t you know—the dignity of the service must be kept up! I’ll tell you how to do it! After having beckoned your waste-paper basket visitor hurriedly to a chair, you go on writing—never mind what you write. I used to answer my invitations during that time, and at the end of five minutes of the most perfect silence—the awed visitor hardly daring to breathe—you look up for a moment from your scribbling and say ‘Well?’ and then cast your eyes down again and proceed with your writing. Your visitor smiles, hesitates, flushes and opens the ball of conversation, shifting his arms and legs about in the most marvellous manner all the while. You needn’t pay much atten-

tion to what he says—perhaps he is a struggling literary man who knows that Salamis is a patron of literature and wants to put his lordship's name down as a subscriber to his new volume of poems, or he wants Salamis to interest himself with the Premier to get him a Civil List pension, or he is an anxious father furnished with an introduction from some slight acquaintance of the Chief's, wanting a clerkship somewhere or other for his son, or he is a former constituent who wants Salamis to speak to the Home Secretary to have some local complaint remedied, or somebody like that. All you do is to go on with your writing, and when the visitor has finished talking, you look up a third time hurriedly from your paper and say, "Very well, I have your card—Lord Salamis is too busy to receive any one this morning, but your claims or request, or whatever it may be, will be laid before his lordship and duly considered—good morning!" drop your eyes on your paper again and go on writing. As a rule they all take the hint and rise and leave immediately — sometimes though, an Irishman

wishes to have a few more words on the subject, but never mind him, go on writing, and with an occasional 'good morning' curtly said, the most boring waste-paper basket visitor will eventually be dismissed. That's my own special dodge, the letter-writing one, and I flatter myself it works very well. Scrope used to stand up and talk, and couldn't get rid of a man under half an hour. You had better adopt my plan."

"Of course," laughed Kit, "as soon as my eye gets educated sufficiently to distinguish the waste-paper basket caller from his more important brother."

"His more important brother, as you call him, is very soon distinguished, even when his name doesn't help your knowledge. He is a very different man altogether! He comes into your room with a kind of House-of-Commons air (you may know that air—occasionally it is unpleasant), never sits down, but stands on the hearthrug with his back against the mantelpiece, whilst making a pendulum of his walking-stick, talks in a sharp business-like voice of what he wants with Salamis, and if he is a

manufacturing member, intersperses his conversation with private questions concerning the Board of rather an American nature—what's your work? what's your pay? what's your vacation? and the like. With such a man you don't go on writing, but lean back in your chair and answer all his *business* queries if you can—if you are unable, well, you must refer him to the Chief. When a really great man comes into your room—you won't get many of them, for Collins takes them, as a rule, straight to Salamis; I need hardly say you are as polite as possible, keep him waiting as little as possible, and take him across the corridor *yourself* to Salamis's room. There, I think I have given you enough advice to make you the most complete official ever seen in Whitehall! Stop! I have forgotten one important fact. Salamis is often obliged to see people who bore him and won't take any hint about departure, his plan then is to pull down his spring blind and pull it up again with a sharp bang."

"Why?"

"That means you are to come into his

room and help to get rid of the intruder. I used on those occasions to take him in letters for signature, and then lean over his chair and talk in a whisper—no visitor stops long after that.”

As Upton concluded his invaluable advice in walked Lord Salamis.

“Well, Mowbray, I hope Upton has been advising you upon your new duties,” said the statesman, shaking the young man cordially by the hand.

Kit replied in the affirmative, and in a few graceful words said how much indebted he was to Lord Salamis for advancing him.

“No thanks, my dear Mowbray! no thanks. When I found you were not one of the ‘hard bargains’ I intended to advance you—in fact, I put you into the Board with the sole intention, if I conscientiously could, of advancing you. How long have you been in the office?”

“Nine months,” replied Kit.

“Nine months! exactly the time it took Mæcenas to find out the good qualities of Horace—and though you are not Horace,

and I am not Mæcenas, still it is a precedent for becoming friends after a short acquaintance. Let us look upon the fact as propitious! Sit down, for I want to talk to you about your new duties."

The new duties were not very severe, and Kit soon found himself perfectly at home in their execution. Writing letters, receiving visitors, making notes at deputations, hunting up references in Hansard, examining Blue Books for particular statements when the Chief was to speak in the Lords, and the like—his time was fully occupied. But work, when pleasant and free from responsibility, is seldom a disagreeable task. And Kit felt that though he came at eleven and very often did not get away from the Board till after seven, he had very little to complain of. Indeed, he could not but admit that his official lines had fallen into the most pleasant of places. He had (that ambition of Civil servants!) a well furnished and most imposing room to himself, overlooking St. James's Park. Instead of clubbing together with his colleagues to have half-an-hour's read of the paper, as had

been his custom formerly, a soft footed and dignified messenger brought him in every morning, for his own special use, the *Times*, the *Post*, and of course the *Censor*. No wretched spring-broken candle-lamp, supplied by a close-fisted and cantankerous Board of Works, shot its feeble flickering light over his papers at eventide; but, fitted into the mahogany of his bureau, were silver candlesticks, which branched out and held in their claws the wax candles of refined civilization. From the ordinary routine business of the Board he was as free as an officer's servant from drill. No vice-president, assistant-secretary, or senior examiner, had a word to say to him—he had but to acknowledge one master, and that was Lord Salamis; he had to perform but one duty, and that was obedience to the wishes and behests of the Lord President. Like certain people who say that they are in the world though not of it, Kit was in the Board of Conventions though not of it—he still drew his salary of 350*l.* as a junior examiner, but instead of the duties of a junior examiner he did those of a

private secretary, for which he received an additional 300*l.* a year. Six hundred and fifty pounds a year, agreeable work, and all the charms which a good social position confers, Kit had certainly every reason, I think, to congratulate himself upon his good fortune.

Of course his promotion was a subject of the most cordial congratulation from the inmates of the Deanery; and his mother and sisters, when they saw his name at the end of an official letter published in the *Times*, looked upon it as certain that their "dear Kit" would end by becoming Prime Minister.

The Dean came up to town on purpose to see his boy, and the Colonel gave his nephew a breechloader, such as only wealth can buy, and which made the young man long for the pheasants at Yllton, and the black game on the Tor-moor. But there is no rose without its thorns. Delighted as Kit was at his promotion, he had to sustain at the outset a bitter disappointment. It was now almost the middle of July, and in another month he had been hoping to be

cresting the virgin snow of many a pinnacle in the Bernese Oberland. To his mortification he heard from Lord Salamis that he must abandon all idea, for the present, of vacation, as it would be necessary for him to remain in town during August and September. There was pressing business which had to be done, and he could not be spared. Of course he acquiesced as if he had been charmed at the arrangement, but when he went back to his lodgings he could have wept as his gaze met his knapsack, thick boots, and other Alpine paraphernalia, which had been joyfully heaped in a corner ready for use. Fancy London in August and September! Awful, is it not? Well, have you ever tried it? Suffer me to state that it is far from being so unbearable as you imagine.

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